



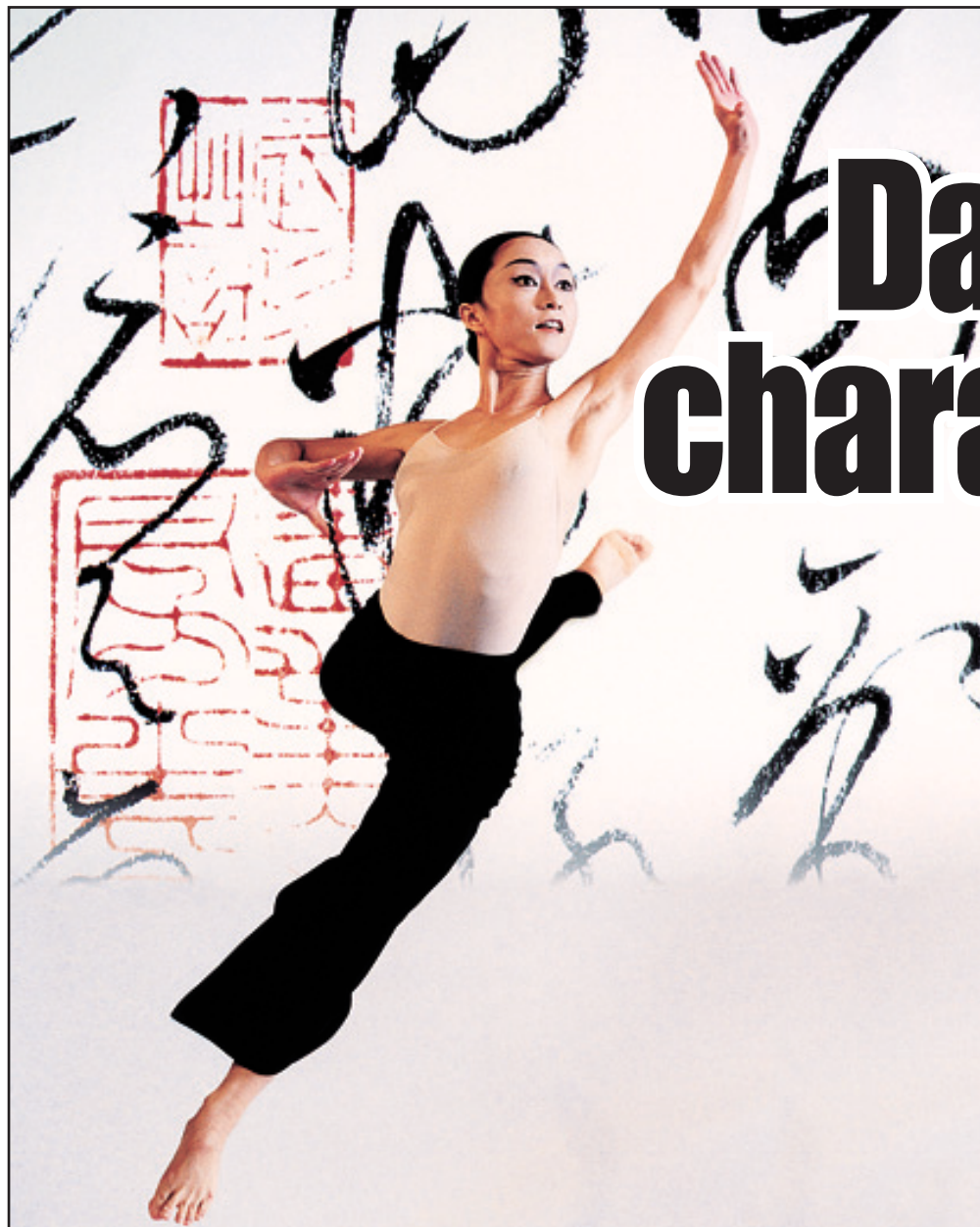
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house a home

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Dancing characters

Next Friday, Cloud Gate Dance Theater will present one of its lyrical dances, *Cursive*, in Beijing.

The troupe, which has been homeless since its studio and warehouse were ravaged in a blaze last February, is continuing its world tour.

Lin Hwai-min, its leader, believes tai chi and martial arts are in the DNA of Chinese dancers.

Its *Cursive* is rooted in the focused energy and movements of calligraphic brushwork.

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Property costs won't taper off

By Han Manman

Housing prices are expected to continue their rise into next year as inflation looms and banks resume lending. The highest spikes can be expected in Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou, according to a report released by a government think tank early this week.

Property values recovered from last year's market slump during the last few months, the report said. The average price of a home in the 70 largest cities grew 3.9 percent since last October, its fastest year-on-year growth rate since September 2008.

Inflation is also expected to act as an incentive for investors to put more cash into property, as it tends to benefit from rising price levels.

The report, issued by the China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), forecasts a boom in the housing market between 2009 and 2010, with stabilization to come in the second half of next year. But during the first



A burst of bank lending is driving real estate recovery.

CFP Photo

quarter, prices will remain stable regardless of demand.

The report also forecasts a

jump in the consumer price index in the second quarter, and other policies may contribute to

more housing purchases. Real estate investment is also likely to increase in the second half of

next year.

"Due to rising inflation and its potential to continue into the first quarter as credit expands, property prices may pick up mid next year," said Ni Pengfei, an expert at the CASS.

The report says the way to adjust and control the property market will be by maintaining stable market growth and preventing speculation and fluctuations.

"The government should encourage consumption because rising sales lead to growing investment. At the same time, speculation should be prevented, because it makes the market unstable," Ni said.

An early recovery in the real estate sector allows developers to have ample liquidity, which they will use to buy land at high prices, the report said. Local government is also trying to increase its take of land sales.

While the country's long-term urbanization trend has underpinned the property market, housing affordability remains a concern.

Beijing introduced a range of policies to support the real estate market late last year, from reducing down payments and mortgage rates to making it easier for residents to sell homes.

A burst of bank lending, not government policies, had been the main factor driving real estate recovery, Ni said.

But he said Beijing should keep its stimulus policies in place, fine-tuning them to ensure they benefit ordinary home buyers instead of speculators.

The report advised the government to fine-tune its moderately loose monetary policy to meet the changing economic situation.

The report is the first green book of its kind published in China. Green books are published by government sectors to print current advice for politicians.

City set to make electric cars

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing, via the municipal government's New Power Automobile, will have electric cars on the market by 2011.

The electric car under design would be chargeable from common 220-volt home power outlets. It will require 10 hours to charge completely. At special recharge stations, that time could be slashed to two hours.

Each charge will be good for up to 200 kilometers.

The exact release date has not been settled, but it will be "between 2011 and 2015," Xu Heyi, chairman of Beijing Automobile Group, said. The group is the parent company

of Foton Motors and manufactures a number of series vehicles, including sedans, business caravans, jeeps, SUVs and trucks under the brands of Daimler-Benz, Hyundai and Foton.

The new company is part of Foton Motors, which focuses on family-use vehicles and business vehicles. Its most recent Beijing brand BE701 sedan has a maximum speed of 160 kilometers per hour, Xu said at the launch.

By 2011, Beijing will be producing 50,000 alternate-power vehicles, and 100,000 by 2015. No fewer than 5,000 will be electric cars.

"We have to turn Beijing

into a platform for first-class electric cars, R&D, standardization and professionals," Liu Qi, the city's former mayor and current party secretary, said.

China released a report on alternative-power vehicles which asked manufacturers to develop hybrid electric vehicles (HEV), battery-electric vehicles (BEV), plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles (PHEV), fuel-cell electric vehicles (FCEV), hydro-powered vehicles, natural gas vehicles, solar vehicles and methanol-powered vehicles for the Chinese market.

The report forecasts oil-driven vehicles should occupy fewer than 50 percent of the market.

Over the past two years, alternative-power vehicles have become the focus of automakers throughout the country.

In Tangshan, Hebei Province, an electric vehicle production plant is already under construction. Its goal is to produce 500,000 electric vehicles by 2012.

In Henan Province, the provincial government said the cities of Xinxiang and Luoyang will be producing alternative-power vehicles by 2015.

"We're going in the right direction," Chen Shu, an automobile industry and market observer, said. "But we need to prevent wasting these subsidies on irrational expansion."

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Competition in expat job market becomes stiff



By Venus Lee

Expats looking for work might find it more difficult than they did five years ago, said a spokeswoman for the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) at the Beijing International Human Resources and Expatriate Services Expo (HR Expat 2009) last weekend.

"Unlike before, employers are increasingly picky about the qualifications held by their foreign staff," Yang Jiameng, the spokeswoman said. "Employers not only want candidates fluent in Chinese, but also with work experience in the industry."

Yang Jingjing, an HR manager at IP Chine, said the French IT company wanted to recruit five people but found few qualified applicants. "We want someone who cannot only communicate fluently both in Chinese and English but who also has excellent IT skills. However, most of the applicants do not have a professional background in IT," he said.

English language ability is no longer an advantage for expats seeking work. Colin Friedman, managing director at China Expert International, said the job market for foreigners is shrinking in China. "It is becoming harder and harder for international people to find suitable jobs in China, because there are more and more Chinese people with excellent English skills," he said.

Yang said there has been a huge increase in the number of expatriates looking for employment in China since the financial crisis in 2007. Two years ago, most domestic opportunities for foreigners were in education. But the onslaught of job seekers is forcing many to compete in finance, IT, engineering and technology research and development.

"In the past, we have had many job vacancies, but not enough applicants, but the situation has completely changed," Yang said. In order to alleviate expat unemployment, SAFEA organized a second job fair at the Hong-kong Macau Center.

SAFEA has held major job fairs in the city every April since 2005. About 200 foreigners attended its first expo in 2005, but that number ballooned to 1,200 this April. This is SAFEA first winter job fair.

Molly Leighton, who sources teachers for English First, a training school, said hard times around the globe has sent many to China in search of work. "This year, for our spoken English teaching positions, we've received many resumes from people with professional backgrounds – even lawyers," she said.

Maria Bencurova, 23, a Slovakian woman who graduated from the International Relationship and Diplomacy College of City University Slovakia, came to the city four months ago to find work in academic research. The expo was a useless stop for her, because it was only offering work in education, medical, insurance and human resources management. "I will continue searching for a job. The country is an emerging economy, so there must be more opportunities," she said.

More than 50 companies and educational services attended the winter Expo, which attracted more than 700 expatriates. An estimated 85 percent found work, the spokeswoman said.

According to the latest reports from the National Bureau of Statistics, around 217,000 foreigners held work at the end of 2008, an increase of 7,000 from the previous year.

Expect disappointment if English language is your only job skill.

Who should take care of my welfare treatment?

By Zhao Hongyi

A Wuhan University professor has been the topic of many web forums since his employer repossessed his apartment and refused to pay his hospital bills.

Zhang Zaiyuan obtained his Ph.D. in architecture from the University of Tokyo in the early 1990s, worked at the University of Hong Kong in 1997 and returned to China to work at the University of Wuhan as dean of its College of Architecture in 2005.

In 2006, Zhang was diagnosed with a rare nerve disease and was hospitalized. After years of treatment, his illness is worsening and he can no longer breathe without mechanical aid.

The university terminated his contract on April 30, ended its support of his medical treatment

and repossessed his apartment.

Many netizens aware of the case have pointed to the country's employment laws, condemning the university and taking up donations for the professor.

But the university countered that Zhang was not a permanent employee. It paid 686,000 yuan in medical expenses and gave 165,000 yuan to his family since 2006.

A spokesman for the university said Zhang's contract required him to spend more than 120 days in the university as an employee to receive health coverage and an apartment.

He was first diagnosed with the illness in 2006. "Even then, the university continued paying his salary and medical expenses," the spokesman said.

The reason they declared the contract void on April 30 was that it was the expiration date, he said. "But we have continued to support the professor."

Many were angry at the university's attitude, but some newspapers said the professor was obligated to pay his own way using the money he earned as salary.

The country is still in the throws of transition from a fully state-supported medical program to an individual employee benefits program. Many elderly and retired workers continue to receive the same benefits as when they were first contracted.

"In professor Zhang's case, he should participate in the new national welfare network, either on his own or with the aid of the university," Zhu Mingyong, a lawyer from the Beijing Zhong-guan Law Office, said.

"The university should have informed him of this option and persuaded him to take it the day he signed on," the lawyer said.

The *Changsha Evening News* criticized that tradition of relying on one's employers to solve everything. "Times have changed!" its editorial said.

The university said it sympathizes with the professor, but it would have preferred he turned to them for help rather than to the Internet. "We'll continue to support him because it is our moral imperative," the school's spokesman said.



Professor Zhang Zaiyuan remains hospitalized.

Photo provided by China Youth Daily

Grads turn to cramped colonies to pursue dream

By Jin Zhu

Lian Si, an associate professor at the University of International Business and Economics, has found fame with his new book *Yizu*, "ant group," which was published in English last September.

The title refers to the well educated poor that are crunched into big communities. Lian's book attracted so much attention that the group is now the fourth most recognized disadvantaged groups in society after farmers, the unemployed and peasants.



Lian Si, 29, the youngest scholar, won the National Social Science Fund for "Yizu" research.



The compact community grows denser every day.

From village to village

Crowds of young people shuffle across an overpass 100 meters from the Xiaoyue River in Erlizhuang, Haidian District, every morning.

Although it is only separated from the Olympic Village by the Badaling Expressway, the village has a totally different environment. Cars kick up clouds of soot as they bump across the narrow roads, and the area's small shops and dilapidated eateries are caked with advertisements for housing rentals.

Hundreds of thousands of residents live in this compact community: an "ant group."

Zheng Zhangjun, 27, from Chifeng, Inner Mongolia, is one of these residents.

Zheng grew up in a remote village from which he was the third student to ever attend college. Before 5th Grade, his only light for studying was a paraffin lamp. "Although the smell irritated my nose, I ignored it. To study in the big city and live there was my only dream. That hasn't changed," he said.

Zheng graduated from the University of Science and Technology Beijing in 2006 with a degree in computer science. He moved to the Yizhan Student Department in Erlizhuang that same day in July 2006.

Zheng said that since Erlizhuang was so close to his school, he knew the place well. By sharing a 20-square-meter room with five people, he could live while paying only 1,350 yuan for rent.

There are many other student enclaves along the road. Some have even more simple and crude amenities. A bed in an apartment with a tile floor and whitewashed walls runs as cheap as 100 yuan per month.

But it's more than the heavy smog. Zheng says the area has an inescapable feeling of laze and depression.

"Most people earn little. Life is nothing but work, sleep and online games," he said.

Although he has been in the community for three years, he still has a hard time believing he is living in the capital. "This area is like my hometown. Only now am I realizing that I moved from one village to another," he said.



Crowds of young people rush to buses to make the long commute to work every morning.

Photos provided by Li Yuxiang

For dreams

Lian Si first recognized the "ant group" during a 2007 sociological investigation as part of his postdoctoral studies at Peking University.

"A story about graduate life in Beijing in *China News Week* introduced me to the group: they are well-educated, but they live a hard life at the bread line. Still, they insist on staying in the big city," Lian said.

After recruiting volunteers from the university forum, Lian's 15-man volunteer group started its work. In the two years since, Lian and his colleagues have visited almost every one of these communities in Beijing to interview 563 residents about their lives and feelings.

Lian said he had a hard time settling on the term "ant group."

"In China, nobody has named a group of people after an animal before. However, I was astonished

by its great number, community organization and tenacity. There was no word more accurate for describing this group," he said.

Over 100,000 graduates live in five to six of these compact communities in Beijing. The average salary is 1,956 yuan per month, which is far below the city's average of 3,726 yuan, according to March data from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics. Most spend at least two hours commuting to remote locations to work.

More than 50 percent were from rural areas, another 20 percent came from county-level cities. Fewer than 8 percent were from a provincial capital.

"Most come from poor families and wish to improve their life on their own. Working and living in the big city gives them the best opportunity," Lian said.

Data from the survey show

that most graduates were majoring in international relations, international trade, computer science, and marketing, and other special majors that seldom can be applied in the countryside.

"The special training courses at most universities are not practical enough, and that plays a big role in creating the ant group. Most have no hope of finding work outside the big cities," Lian said.

Others were more optimistic about Lian's findings. "It is beyond what I imagined. They live such a hard life and have a tough job, I thought most would be depressed, but they carried on because of their dreams and responsibilities to their families," he said.

"The pressure is great," Zheng Zhangjun said, "but it's not enough to scare me. When things get tough, I just find a way to vent.

Personally, I prefer basketball."

Zheng said that during the first three months after he graduated, while he was out of work, life was still hard in the community. "I went to job interviews in the morning and rushed back to program whatever my employers wanted me to work on," Zheng said.

Today he engineers software for a state-owned enterprise and works odd jobs in his spare time.

He has saved enough to rent a small restaurant and plans to open it at the end of the year. "I just want to help my family to settle down in Beijing. Then they can support themselves with the restaurant."

Zheng also hopes to run his own company within five years. "For a software company, there is no specific capital cost for equipment. I'm good at it, and confident."

How to help



The men's dormitory is somewhat tidy.

"To buy a car within three years, to have down payment on a house within five years," – it was a popular wish on Lian's questionnaire.

"Their strong will and passion for the future life moved me, especially because of their hard life. However, since only a few people can really become successful within such a short period, I worry what will happen if their dreams don't come true in five years," Lian said.

Because most "ant group" members have already graduated, they are no longer registered Beijing residents and lack insurance: the government does not support them.

Ding Ningning, director of

social development at the Development Research Center of The State Council, said most of the "ant group" are immigrants from other areas. In foreign countries, the Immigration Office would be in charge of this group.

The government, however, has taken notice. Lian received 80,000 yuan from the National Social Science Fund this year to continue his investigation.

"Now that the 'ant group' exists, the next question is how to help them," Lian said.

"Some want to give the job to the Ministry of Civil Affairs and China Communist Youth League. We need to improve their conditions and adopt some policies to support them," Ding said.

Obama wraps up first visit

Toward bridging the gap between China and the US

5
Outlook

"Can I do it differently?"

This was the question US President Barack Obama encouraged young Chinese people to constantly ask themselves in their pursuit of success when he spoke before college students in Shanghai on Monday.

The same question may help China and the US develop closer ties in the coming years.

US President Barack Obama ended his four-day state visit to the country Wednesday afternoon with a tour to the Badaling section of the Great Wall.

The light-hearted visit to the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site came after his meeting with Premier Wen Jiabao at the Great Hall of the People.

During the meeting, Obama told Wen that US-China cooperation is crucial to many major global issues, such as economic recovery, climate change and regional and global peace.

On Tuesday, Obama held talks with President Hu Jintao, and a joint statement was issued after the summit. The two countries reiterated in the statement their commitment to building a "positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship in the 21st century," and promised to jointly cope with common challenges.

Obama began his China visit last Sunday night in Shanghai, where he met with municipal officials and had a town hall meeting with college students. He arrived in Beijing Monday afternoon.



US President Barack Obama tours the Great Wall during his China visit this week.

CFP Photo

Analysis A different way to nurture US-China relations

For a long time, the real China has been misunderstood by Westerners because of either ignorance, ideology or other reasons, and China's word often seemed to have been taken as something evil or dangerous.

The West's perception of the country has been changing gradually, and a positive turn has occurred. US President Barack Obama said more than once during his Asian tour that the US will not seek to con-

tain China's rise but welcome it as a strong and prosperous player in the community of nations.

Whether it is an expedience to solicit the country's support during the worst recession in decades or a strategic decision, Obama's remarks have created a good starting point to further China-US ties. The Obama administration has also made it clear that the two nations, having much in common while being dif-

ferent in certain ways, were not destined to be adversaries.

Such a way of thinking is just what Confucius taught his students thousands of years ago: "Be harmonious yet different."

Many Westerners do not realize the country's gigantic internal gap in wealth, regional development and public utilities. Some take Shanghai and Beijing for what the entire country is like, while others associ-

ate the Chinese people only with the Han nationality.

In this sense, China needs to think and act differently – by telling the world more of its less developed areas and evaluating herself more from the perspective of others.

The US, on the other hand, may also need to be introspective and take initiatives to figure out effective new ways to tackle its own chronic problems.

Sidelights Obama meets half-brother

US President Barack Obama said he took five minutes out of his busy state visit to meet a half-brother in Beijing.

Obama told a US television network that he met Mark Ndesandjo and his wife briefly Monday in the

capital, where he held meetings with Chinese leaders earlier this week.

The president has the same Kenyan father as Ndesandjo, who recently published a book, *Nairobi to Shenzhen*, which described Barack Obama, Sr. as abusive.

Obama said he does not know his half-brother very well. He said it was not a secret his father was a troubled person, noting that he wrote about his father's alcoholism in his own book, *Dreams of My Father*.

Obama said his time with his father was a part of his history and background, but he does not spend a lot of time "brooding over it."

Ndesandjo traveled from his home in Shenzhen to meet his half-brother. (Xinhua)



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Not all suffer from flu

Vaccine shortage spells profits for drug makers

A/H1N1, swine flu, is a serious ailment that causes headaches for both its victims and public administration.

But the disease otherwise branded the bane of the season may be a boon for businesses that are poised to cash in on the vaccine market. Profits are up for flu vaccine makers, and local demand is so high that overseas suppliers are being tapped.

Students are priority recipients of A-H1N1 vaccines.

CFP Photo



Foreign makers eye domestic market

International pharmaceutical companies are cashing in on efforts to protect China from the A/H1N1 pandemic with anti-influenza medicines.

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), a leading international pharmaceutical company and the country's largest supplier by sales volume, received approval from the State Food and Drug Administration for its anti-A/H1N1 influenza medicine to enter the China market in July.

Since then, GSK has prepared 1.2 million packs of an anti-A/H1N1 influenza medicine called Relenza, available to all levels of government. It is currently being stockpiled in anticipation of a massive flu outbreak in the coming months.

"GSK expects very strong demand for Relenza this year in China," Mark Reilly, general manager of GSK China, said.

Chen Zhaorong, area medical manager at GSK China, also predicted that GSK will receive more orders in the months ahead.

"Compared with those of

other nations, China's orders are still small (for GSK)," Chen said.

Actually, the production capacity for Relenza is around 60 million packs. GSK has contracts in place to supply Relenza to over 60 economies. At least 10 percent of its new production has been allocated for developing nations.

International pharmaceutical companies are cashing in on efforts to protect China from the H1N1 pandemic with anti-influenza medicines.

But domestic rules mandate that only the government can purchase the anti-A/H1N1 flu medicine. Relenza is not available to consumers.

As the weather turns cold, the country braces for an outbreak. By November 11, 62,871 cases of A/H1N1 flu were already reported in 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions: almost double the cases reported by October 12.

"Many regions are entering the traditional period for flu outbreaks, which lasts two to three months. Prevention and control work is becoming tougher," said Liang Wannian, vice director of the health emergency office under the Ministry of Health.

The government plans to allocate 1.09 billion yuan for prevention and treatment of the

resented by the vaccine producers, are also benefitting.

The World Health Organization said the illness likely will not disappear until as many as 80 percent of people worldwide contract A/H1N1 flu.

Vaccines have proven the most efficient way to treat flu. The Chinese government is expected to acquire and store more than 126 million units of influenza vaccinations from the nation's 11 producers.

In late October, the local producers – including Sinovac Biotech, Hualan Biological Engineering and Beijing Tiantan Biological Products – received another round of orders from the Chinese government. They are required to finish producing the vaccine before December 12.

Shares of the companies have been surging. Since August, when Hualan Biological announced the start of clinical trials for its new A/H1N1 vaccine, the company's share price doubled to 62 yuan at the end of October, up from about 30 yuan in mid-August.

(Agencies)

Analyst

Strong growth for Chinese vaccine market

By Huang Daohen

The vaccine market may be a huge source of growth during the next decade, according to a report by Zhongtong Investment Consultants.

The report said the domestic vaccine market is already a major force in world pharmaceuticals and will continue to be one in the coming years.

Guo Fanli, an analyst at the Shenzhen-based consultancy, points to four causes.

First, the recent outbreak of A/H1N1 cases has increased the demand for vaccines. The gov-

ernment already ordered over 42 million doses of vaccines from domestic producers.

Guo said the government would speed up its vaccine orders as fears mount of an outbreak.

Outbreak aside, demand for health care is also growing rapidly. As the standard of living rises, so too has the awareness of healthcare, Guo said.

According to the government's schedule for public health care reform, all citizens will have access to affordable medical services by 2020. The government recently

announced it will spend approximately 850 billion yuan over the next three years to improve the nation's health care system.

"This increase in funding will provide the whole industry with confidence and a good environment for further development," Guo said.

Most importantly, Guo said there is a stable demand for vaccines with the huge population. "This will support the sector's growth, with demand for vaccines in pediatrics playing an important role," he said.

Last year, there were more

than 16 million newborns for a birth rate of 12.4 percent. Though it is predicted the birth rate will drop, the large population remains a sizable market for children's vaccines, Guo said.

He said he is also optimistic about a market for consumer-grade vaccines. Currently the number of consumer-accessible vaccines is very low: about 10 to 20 percent. "But this will change as increased awareness of personal healthcare and the private market continues to develop," he said.

Rich list jumps after new stocks

The combined wealth of the 40 richest people on the Chinese mainland more than doubled to \$106 billion (723 billion yuan) this year from \$52 billion in 2008, thanks to the country's booming stock market, *Forbes* China reported.

This echoes the 2009 Hurun rich list released earlier. Electric car maker Wang Chuanfu topped the magazine's annual rich list, rising from the 23rd spot last year. He also was No. 1 on the 2009 Hurun rich list.

"(The country's) capital market has performed strongly this year with recovered market sentiment and improved corporate earnings, reflecting the effectiveness of the government's proactive economic policy," said Russell Flannery, *Forbes*' Shanghai bureau chief.

Agricultural feed tycoon Liu Yongxing took second position followed by Zong Qinghou, chairman of beverage giant Wahaha Group.

On the Hurun mainland rich list, Zhang Yin, controlling shareholder of Hong Kong-listed Nine Dragons Paper, and Xu Rongmao, chairman of Shanghai-based property developer Shimao Group, took the No. 2 and No. 3 spots.

Forbes calculated public assets using share prices and exchange rates as of October 16 while Hurun calculations, compiled by Rupert Hoogewerf, who used to work for *Forbes*, were based on September figures.

China's key stock index jumped more than 50 percent in the year ending October 16. The rebound came after the government began massive stimulus spending and state-owned commercial banks extended record loans to bolster economic growth.

Wang, 43, chairman of electric car and battery maker BYD, saw his wealth jump nearly sixfold, when his shares in the company, which attracted investment by US billionaire Warren Buffett, soared by the same factor.

The strong stock markets also helped propel new faces toward the top of *Forbes*' list of the 400 richest mainlanders.

The highest ranking newcomer was Liu Zhongtian, who jumped from 130th place last year to No. 8 this year with a net wealth of \$3.79 billion.

Liu's aluminum products maker China Zhongwang raised US \$1.3 billion in an April initial public offering in Hong Kong.

Officials from *Forbes* China said it was too bad they could not include the effects of the country's new Nasdaq-like market, which started trading on October 30.

Domestic media reports have said the Shenzhen-based board, called ChiNext, created 13 billionaires on its first day after most stocks doubled their IPO price.

(Agencies)

China gets its own 'Ivy League'

China has recently formed an organization of top universities known as the Chinese "Ivy League." But many wonder if this move to imitate an aspect of US education will lead to better student training or increased elitism.

Students from the country's top nine universities will now have a chance to take courses in the other campuses that form China's "Ivy League" group.

The Chinese league, named C9, is composed of Peking University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Harbin Institute of Technology, Nanjing University, Xi'an Jiaotong University and China Science and Technology University.

The universities will accept each other's course credits and permit students to attend courses in other league member campuses.

The nine schools will use advanced technology to enhance intercampus communication. Lectures by selected professors will be videotaped and posted online, and regular long-distance seminars will be held.

League members have also created shared postgraduate courses, and will strengthen collaboration with elite foreign schools such as the US's Ivy League and Australia's G8.

The Ministry of Education approved the C9 plan in late October. Xu Mei, the ministry's spokeswoman, said the establishment of the league is a "helpful attempt that is conducive to the construction of high-quality colleges, cultivation of top-notch innovative talents and enhanced cooperation and exchanges between Chinese universities and their foreign counterparts."

The States' Ivy League, comprised of the eight oldest and finest institutions of higher learning in the country, includes Yale University and Harvard University.



The growing preoccupation of Chinese parents is how to get their children into premier universities. CFP Photo

The third eye

Develop new and unique identities

News of the Chinese "Ivy League" brought to mind some thoughts regarding my own experience as the president of Arizona State University.

While I certainly applaud China's intent to create a consortium of world-class institutions, I suggest that in order to build great universities, it is first essential to emphasize a pragmatic approach to institutional design.

The objective must be to meet the needs of the people rather than institutional ambitions for status. As China undertakes planning for the development of the newly formed alliance, authorities should bear in mind that Ivy League universities do not necessarily represent ideal institutional

models for China – a nation that has the opportunity to lead in the development of new institutional designs.

Institutions like Columbia University, where I taught for 12 years and served prior to my departure as executive vice provost, were formed in response to the needs of another century. Nevertheless, most American universities, both public and private, as well as universities around the world, continue to model themselves on this handful of elite institutions.

Across the globe, the infrastructure for higher education remains dangerously underbuilt and undifferentiated. We must build access even as we demand innovation and differentiation of our colleges and universities.

Institutions must move beyond historical models of elitism and leverage their individual and local strengths to develop unique identities, thus fostering intellectual flexibility, creativity and the capacity for innovation in a global society interconnected by advances in technology. Colleges and universities must embrace a broader societal role by advancing desired outcomes. Each must adapt to be of the greatest value to its constituents.

What is required are institutions committed to academic excellence, inclusiveness to a broad demographic and maximum societal impact.

– Michael M. Crow, president of Arizona State University

Analyst

Can an 'Ivy League' blossom on Chinese soil?

There are still questions as to how well the system would work.

The fact is, most of the universities do not have a fully integrated credit system. Up to 80 percent of the courses are compulsory, compared to only 40 percent overseas.

In recent years, less than 30 percent of the students were allowed to change their major. Since students cannot choose courses freely in their own campus, how will the cross-university

course-sharing work?

The C9 should act even before students step on campus. The league should design its own entrance examination, which might even be expanded to other first-rate colleges in the country.

By doing so, it can alleviate the pressure on high school students and bring in changes to our college entrance examination system. High school students could either choose to take the special exam for the C9, which might have

higher requirements, or the regular college entrance examination.

Moreover, the C9 should share its resources with other universities. The allocation of university resources differs greatly from place to place. If the group can open its resources to others, it would lift the quality of Chinese higher education as a whole.

The nine universities do not have much difference in terms of facilities and funding, so students will probably

not be very motivated to join the C9 "exchange program."

It is a good idea to encourage communication and exchange between universities, but this will end in vain if not aimed at benefiting the students.

This is why a lot of agreements have been signed in recent years yet not many changes within higher education have occurred.

– Qin Shang, commentator with the *Oriental Morning Post*

Comment

A good start

The US's Ivy League was formed around athletics rather than any academic relationship. Of course, the universities in the league are some of the most famous in the world. However, it's a good start for China's universities to build collegiate alliances and make resources available to other students.

– Jia Jia, US student at Renmin University

Proper implementation most critical

Forming the Chinese Ivy League was the right move. As a student who studied at one of the nine universities, I have first-hand experience about the flaws in the system. It

was almost impossible to transfer between universities, especially to "better" ones.

Now we have seen great progress: the C9 universities have agreed on course credit recognition and student exchanges. If the policies are implemented properly, it would be a great boon for college students. However, the most critical aspect is not good intentions or good plans, but proper implementation.

– Mark Chen, college student

Branding not a guarantee of student success

The key word is "access" for the people rather than emphasis on institutional ambitions for status. To put a brand name on a small group of universities when there are

not enough university places for qualified high school graduates puts added burden and unnecessary pressure on students and their families.

The elitist branding of educational institutions only says how hard it is to get into them, not the crucial question of what becomes of students at that university. For example, the Fortune 500 CEOs graduated from Pittsburgh State, Baylor University, the University of Minnesota, Georgia Institute of Technology, and as many graduated from the state-owned University of Texas as CEOs from Harvard.

– Joyce Slayton Mitchell, visiting scholar from the US

Difficult to reproduce US model

It's difficult for China to reproduce something like the US's Ivy League. The competitive relationship among Chinese universities is administration- and government-oriented while that of the American universities is research and education oriented.

There are no public universities in the Ivy League, yet all the universities in the C9 are state-owned. The former answers to their university's board, while the latter answers to the Ministry of Education.

– Ji Ji, researcher at local news magazine (By Huang Daohen)

US cellist and Obama's visit coincide

By He Jianwei

US President Barack Obama arrived in China on Monday – the same day world-renowned US cellist Yo-Yo Ma performed for the first time at the National Center for the Performing Arts.

Ma joked that Obama seemed to be on his trail.

"I believe he is chasing me, because I just came from Japan, where I held a recital in Tokyo. And then the president arrived and gave a speech there. Then I moved to Beijing, and he followed me, and we are now both in Beijing. Did I do anything wrong?" Ma said before rehearsal on Monday afternoon.

Ma, along with violinist Itzhak Perlman, clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Gabriella Montero, performed a quartet created by *Star Wars* score composer John Williams at Obama's inauguration last January 20.

Ma, who was criticized for the recorded performance, said they did so a day earlier because Washington DC's cold weather could have caused the instruments' strings to snap.

It was not his first presidential serenade. Ma has played for five sitting presidents. When he was 7, he and his sister performed for President John F. Kennedy. "This is unbelievable, isn't it? It was like 47 years ago," he said.

Ma was appointed by Obama to



Ma and Stott (right) have been performing together since the 90s.

Photo provided by National Center for the Performing Arts

serve on the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. But when asked about his political connections, Ma said he would rather talk about music than politics.

"I think there are different realms, different engines in society. There are political engines, economic engines and cultural engines. I prefer to stay in the cultural realm because different realms have different parameters," he said.

Born in Paris to Chinese parents in 1955, Ma has won 16 Grammy Awards, recorded more than 70 CDs and is regarded as one of the world's most revered cellists.

Love of music was written in his genes. His mother was a singer and his father a professor of music, who taught him how to play the cello at age 4. A year later, he gave his first cello recital.

It was soon clear the Mas had

a musical prodigy. When Ma was 9, the family moved to New York City so he could study at the Juilliard School of Music. He made his Carnegie Hall debut the same year. At 15, he appeared with his sister on US television in a concert conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

He went to Harvard University for a liberal arts education, but by the time he graduated in 1976, he was already an internationally

acclaimed cellist.

Ma has collaborated with many classical musicians. British pianist Kathryn Stott is one of his long-time accompanists. They met in 1978 when Stott was a student in London. "It was the beginning of my music life," she said.

Since then, they have been doing three or four tours a year. "We were both young people and grew up with music together," she said.

Her collaboration with Ma on the Grammy Award-winning CD *Soul of the Tango* and its successor, *Obrigado Brazil*, made her an advocate of tango and other Latin dance music.

Ma has never lived in China, but is familiar with Chinese culture from Chinese movies and novels like *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which his parents introduced to him.

His deepening fascination with Chinese culture led him to establish the Silk Road Project in 2001, which studies the cultural, artistic, and intellectual traditions along Marco Polo's path on the ancient Silk Road. Through this initiative, the cellist hopes to connect the musical cultures of the US, Europe and Asia.

"That's the way I'm trying to understand Chinese history – as a flow – Chinese culture as a giant flow of many cultures combining over and over again and producing incredible works of art," Ma said.

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Oman Ambassador Abdullah Salleh Al-Saadi Photo by Lenus Lee

By Venus Lee

Oman is seeking greater cooperation with China, particularly in its banking and aviation industry, the Ambassador of Oman said Wednesday at the Omani National Day reception.

"The cooperation between the

two sides has been mainly concentrated on petrochemical engineering. We plan to expand and enhance our cooperation to other fields, especially in the banking and aviation industry," Ambassador Abdullah Salleh Al-Saadi said.

He said the sultanate was

Oman seeks to expand into Chinese banking and aviation

impressed with China's financial system, which has remained stable despite the economic downturn, and the yuan's increasingly strong performance in the international market.

"There are 32 banks in Oman; 19 are foreign banks, but none of them is a Chinese-funded bank. And the situation is the same in aviation industry," Abdullah said. "Oman's economic diversification needs China's cooperation. To expand cooperation in the two fields is my main task next year."

The bilateral trade volume between Oman and China currently stands at \$10 billion (68 billion yuan). Oman is China's biggest

petroleum exporter in West Asia and North Africa, with 55 percent of the sultanate's oil supplies going to China, the ambassador said.

Chinese products are also sought after in Oman "because of their good quality and affordable price. Furniture, electronics and construction materials are very popular," he said.

At the same time, bilateral investment is quickly increasing. "Most Chinese companies concentrate on Oman's oil, gas, infrastructure and tourism sectors. More than 50 Chinese companies have investments in the country, which contributes considerably to the country's development," Abdullah said.

"Meanwhile, Omani companies'

interests in China have expanded in recent years and they are optimistic about opportunities for development in China," he said. "The relationship between the two sides has made significant progress since China's reform and opening up."

The ambassador said Oman also values folk exchanges between the two countries. Its sultan, Qaboos Bin Said, has donated half a million dollars toward the construction of a mosque in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, where more than 40,000 Arabs live. Oman has also opened the Qaboos Arab Research Lecture Program at Peking University to improve Arabic language education in China.

Highlights of EU Belgian expo pavilion unveiled



The center of the pavilion will look like a giant brain cell, organizers say.

By Han Manman

A roofing ceremony for the EU Belgian Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai Expo was recently held, three months after the pavilion's construction began.

Its entire roof will be covered with glass and visitors will enter the building through a gigantic color-changing "brain cell," as described by organizers.

"It's great to see the rapid progress on the pavilion, which is a fine tribute to EU-China cooperation in the form of our joint European and Chinese team of designers and construction workers," Serge Abou, the EU Ambassador and commissioner general for the expo, said at the ceremony.

"The roof is just like the hat on your head that helps to keep your brain warm and working well, and this is especially appropriate for our pavilion with the giant brain cell at its center and our major exhibition theme of Intelligent Europe."

Abou said the entrance, called Introductory Tunnel, will feature "blue veins" that will have audio-visual presentations of the EU's history and its key tenets such as "peace and reconciliation" and "eco-

nomics and social progress."

Farther down is Exchanges, where there will be more audio-visual presentations about exchanges between Europeans and the rest of the world. Among them are the euro and the monetary union, the Schengen visa and the Erasmus study program.

"The grand finale of this European experience will be what we call the Europe Feels Cyclone, a cylindrical array of screens dazzling the visitor with colorful sights and vibrant sounds of exciting European life," the ambassador said, explaining that it aims to give visitors an approximation of what it is like to be a citizen of the 27-nation EU.

At the ceremony, Abou also unveiled the pavilion's logo – numerous hollow stars in motion – a stylish variation on the EU flag symbolizing the dynamism and vitality of the EU, as well as its exciting exhibition at the expo.

Belgium will hold the revolving presidency of the EU during the second half of 2010, a period which covers four of the expo's six-month duration; thus, the EU and Belgium have chosen to share the same pavilion.



Serge Abou (third from left) inspects progress on the pavilion's construction.

Photos provided by Wang Huan

ANZ Australian Film Festival coming next month

By Zhao Hongyi

The Australian Embassy and the Australia-New Zealand Bank are sponsoring the ANZ Australian Film Festival in Beijing from December 4 to 13.

The festival will showcase an exciting mix of classic and newly released Australian films, award-winning animations and groundbreaking documentaries. The films include the dramas *Razzle Dazzle*, *Samson and Delilah* and *Look Both Ways*; the historical films *Ten Canoes*, *Australia* and *Kokoda*;

the animation films *Mary and Max* and *Happy Feet*; the comedy *Kenny*; and some finalists at Tropfest, the world's largest film festival for short films.

"Australia has a vibrant and highly developed film industry with a strong reputation for innovation and fresh talent on the international stage," Australian Ambassador Geoff Raby said.

The 10 feature films, in English with Chinese subtitles, will be screened at Megabox cinema in Sanlitun's The Village.

Another eight award-winning documentaries will be shown at the "Made in Australia" session of the iDOCS International Documentary Festival from December 11 to 13 at the Beijing Film Academy. Two Australian documentary-makers, Amanda King and Mark Lewis, will be present.

The ANZ Film Festival is also sponsored by The Village, The Opposite House, Telstra, Qantas, Tourism Australia and the Australia-China Council.

Volunteers bring computer education to migrant schools first



Greenboard believes computers have more to offer China's education than training in Microsoft Office.

Photos by Derrick Sobodash

By Derrick Sobodash

Four weeks ago, the students at Wende School in Cuigezhuang Village turned on a computer for the first time.

The school's new lab of 20 Loongson-based laptop computers is the first test bed for Greenboard, a Beijing-based volunteer group and a similarly named free curriculum to bring open source software to the Chinese classroom.

The school, located north of Fifth Ring Road, is one of the city's 300 unlicensed schools that accept the children of migrant workers: kids rejected by mainstream education because of their social status and constant mobility.

It was a cold afternoon last Thursday as reporters, volunteers and spokesmen strolled past the muddy entrance to Wende School.

In the classroom, students sat bundled in thick winter coats as they followed the teacher's instructions.

There is no goofing off on Tudou or Renren when the only "Internet" you can connect to is the class intranet on your teacher's computer. For a migrant school, where electricity and heat are a limited blessing, access to the World Wide Web is impossible.

The students, then on their third week in the new computer lab, were still learning to use the laptop's trackpad. But they will soon be learning valuable lessons that many children in public schools are missing out on by using free, open source software.

The new curriculum, which is being tested in the lab for the first time, was created by a group of local volunteers who have been unsatisfied with public education's failure to embrace the learning potential of the computer.

The road to Wende

When French company Dexxon told Greenboard it wanted to donate 20 Loongson computers to a school, deciding where to send them was tough.

After a few bad experiences meeting government-run schools, Greenboard contacted LEAD, a Beijing organization that connects volunteers with the city's 300 migrant schools.

But most of the headmasters the group met with only saw computers as a way to

"A lot of people get something for free and they don't value it. But if they give a little bit on their own, then they have 'invested.' They will be more committed."



Migrant schools are the only option for many kids' education.

acquire students. They packed their labs with broken machines just to impress prospective parents.

"Out of 25 computers, they might have had three that turned on. And they used these three to sell their school," says Fred Muller, 39, the founder of Greenboard. "The computer lab ends up like a display room. It's rarely, if ever, turned on to save on electricity costs."

Since migrant schools run on a shoestring budget, few are willing to bear the power drain of a computer lab.

"We thought about getting the school a solar panel to power the lab. But I know them," Muller says. "You would install a solar panel and they would use it to power everything except the computer room. 'You want to use a computer? Sorry, I'm charging my bike.'"

And that is where Cui Gezhong, Wende's headmaster, was different. Cui was willing to invest his own time and money to build a lab and to buy the necessary networking gear.

He cared about the quality of his students' education – "not just the bottom line," says Pockey Lam, 33, the group's project manager.

Cui and his wife worked out of pocket to renovate and repaint an old storage

closet in the corner of Wende School. They installed bars on the windows to protect the new lab from thieves – the bane of many school labs.

"I think that (his initiative) is very important," Muller says.

Teaching with technology

Greenboard's curriculum is offered online in a Wiki, where teachers are encouraged to develop and share their own lessons. When the Wiki was last frozen to create a second edition of the Greenboard textbook, it weighed in at 220 pages and covered 2nd through 6th grades.

The current lessons provide exercises in art, math, science, English, reading, geography and general problem solving.

The curriculum includes open source programs like KolourPaint, a drawing program, OpenOffice.org Writer, a word processor, and Stardict, a free, multi-language dictionary that can also teach pronunciation.

Wende's teachers have been especially enthusiastic about the vocabulary tools.

"Two weeks ago we talked to a primary school teacher who told us the problem in migrant schools – because of the high turnover rate – is that the ability of the students is very uneven," Lam says.

By using computers to learn English, each student can move through the vocabulary lists at his own pace. The computer lessons also offer a chance to scrap many of the school's outdated and inaccurate English books.

But more interesting is RUR-PLE, a programming game inspired by the earlier educational language Logo. In RUR-PLE, the student directs Karel the robot through a maze of turns using 10 simple commands. The catch is that Karel's makers were cheap and never taught him to turn right.

The challenge usually takes a 4th Grade student 20 minutes to solve. More complex puzzles can take a class hours or weekends.

"Seeing kids spend time on RUR-PLE was quite a revelation," Muller says. "They would sit with Liwen and Julien and spend the whole day hacking with the little robot."

Continued on page 11...

What is open source?

Unlike closed source commercial software, open source is available under a special license that allows and encourages users to change or improve the software, and to share those changes with others.

An open source developer retains his copyright while granting most rights to anyone willing to follow the terms of his license.

Businesses which contribute to open source development earn money by selling support and installation services rather than selling the software itself.

The Firefox web browser, WordPress blog publisher and VLC Media Player are some of the most popular open source programs.

Get involved!

Both Greenboard and LEAD are independent, non-profit volunteer organizations that need help.

If you are interested in volunteering your services as a teacher or teacher's assistant, or in donating second-hand computers to migrant schools, visit LEAD's website at ygclub.org or write to Sun Liwen at liwen@ygclub.org.

Anyone who wants to develop lesson plans, edit existing lessons, translate lessons into more languages or help to make more open source educational software available in Chinese can visit the Greenboard website at greenboard.org.cn or contact Fred Muller at info@greenboard.org.cn.

Xuanwu's Traditional Art Season happens next week

By Venus Lee

The annual Beijing Traditional Art Season, which features Peking Opera, cross talk and acrobatics, returns to Xuanwu district next Monday.

Jia Jingwen, deputy chairman of the cultural department of Xuanwu District, said the seven-day event will highlight century-old culture streets and product brands.

Zhang Yiyuan, a tea shop founded in 1908, has invited 1,000 foreign students to come for tea and learn about tea art.

Laoshe Tea House, popular among tourists for its traditional stage performances, will hold a photo exhibition on 100 world leaders who have visited the place.

Rong Bao Zhai, the city's largest painting and calligraphy shop that opened in 1672, will teach visitors how to create wood-block prints, how to mold and paint porcelain and how to cut seals.

China Bookstore will sponsor a talk about appraising folk collections in its store on Liulichang Cultural Street. Folk art experts will be present to give free appraisal and advice.

In addition, all theaters along Tianqiao – the National Ballet of China, Beijing Acrobatic Troupe, Fenglei Peking Opera Troupe, Tianqiao Theater, Deyun Theater and Wansheng Theater – will present their masterpieces to the public.

The district government has invited 100 people – half of them foreigners – to join a one-day cultural tour of Xuanwu on Saturday to learn about the district's



Folk culture artists at Tianqiao area, Xuanwu District

CFP Photo

history and current situation.

Jia Jingwen said participants will take a look at the lives of imperial officials by visiting clan association offices, learn about traditional commercial culture by surveying famous old shops on Dashilan and experience folk customs by attending theater performances in Tianqiao. They will also be introduced to local religious culture by visiting Fayuan Monas-

tory and Xiannongtan, a temple where the emperor once worshiped the god of grain and produce, she said.

Xuanwu District, which has a history of 3,000 years, has developed a local culture called Xuannan – referred to as the embodiment of old Beijing culture. The Beijing Traditional Art Season is part of the Xuannan Cultural Festival, Xuanwu's yearly cultural event held since 2002.

ASK

Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiyi@ynet.com

Where can I get Vaseline petroleum jelly? A doctor said it can help soothe my daughter's lip, which has been bleeding because of the dry weather. I've been to Watson's and Jenny Lou's but couldn't find it. Hope you can provide me with a good lead.

Try other supermarkets like Carrefour and Walmart. Vaseline petroleum jelly is called *fanshilin* in Chinese. If you still cannot find it there, try the pharmacy of a hospital.

I'm going back home a few days before Christmas and my flight leaves at 4:30 am. I live in Dongcheng district and would normally take the Airport Express, but the subway won't be open yet at that hour. Will there be a good number of cabs on the street at the time? Will they be fussy about bringing me to the airport? These days, I've noticed many drivers are refusing fares to destinations they don't like.

Don't worry, it's easy getting a cab at 4:30 am – much more than at rush hour. Drivers usually like going to the airport since it provides them with a good chunk of income on smooth highway-driving and they're guaranteed another fare back to town. But if you want to be doubly sure you get a ride, book a cab in advance through telephone numbers 96103 or 6683 7339. The service is provided in eight languages.

(By Wei Ying)

... continued from page 10

"You see the concept and think, how are kids going to be interested in coding? But they are!"

It forces students to use logical, simple steps to solve complex problems.

Muller says he believes the ability to offer exposure and training in so many areas is the real power of computers in education.

Past headaches

Wende is not Greenboard's first adventure into Beijing classrooms. In 2007, the group donated 40 refurbished machines to a school on the condition it use open source software for education.

"Some of the PCs that were donated ... we opened them up and it was hard to believe they were running," says Julien Forgeat, 28, the volunteer who tackles Greenboard's technical issues.

At the time, Chinese support – especially for educational software – remained a weak point, and it was not long before the program collapsed.

When the school realized it was possible to get things for free, it scrapped the donations and begged another organization until it got a lab of brand new Windows computers.

"It let you see the real character of the headmasters," Muller says. "They threw out all our (educational) work and went back to teaching how to type Chinese in Notepad."

Things were not much better at government-run schools.

"They would have nice, new computers, a server room and a curriculum. But they never used it," Muller says. "They said they had a real problem asking their teachers to teach more than Office."

The bias that computers are an end-purpose vocational tool rather than an educational tool makes educational projects a tough sell, Lam says.

"The mainstream education system is

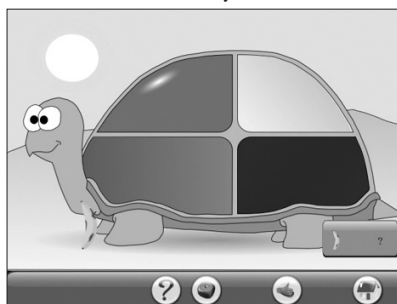


Greenboard's curriculum is getting its first test run in Wende's new lab.

Photo by Derrick Sobodash



Many educational programs are freely available. Greenboard's goal is to give them a curriculum.



Photos provided by Greenboard

Microsoft 100-percent-endorsed. There is nothing else. It's either that, or you have teachers who don't know how to use a computer at all," Muller says.

Part of the problem stems from the textbooks, which Microsoft has long provided to schools for free to encourage them to buy its software. But those textbooks hardly make for a thrilling read.

"The textbooks from Microsoft will teach you how to click the Start button

and change the desktop wallpaper or use Microsoft Word. The kids say it's boring. I agree," Sun says.

The project's future

When Greenboard first went to Wende School, it began training four teachers to use its free curriculum. Today, two of those teachers remain: one is the headmaster.

Teacher loss is always a problem at migrant schools, where many earn less

than 1,000 yuan per month.

For now, the lab is more than any of them had ever hoped for, Cui, the headmaster, says.

"I believe in these children. If they are given the same educational tools and opportunities that most children get, they can exceed their peers and score higher," he says. "I hope one day, students at other migrant schools will have the same opportunity that mine have now."

That might be possible, but not for a while, Muller says.

While the group is visiting schools with LEAD volunteers every weekend, its current total curriculum is tied to Dexxon's machine, which is decidedly not free.

"We've had requests from other migrant schools that already have some second-hand computers. We'd like to support every architecture so we can just give them some disks," Lam says.

The group's first goal is to make the curriculum work with every Loongson-based computer before expanding to the more common Intel-based computers found in most schools and homes, he says. Most of the information is already there, it will just take a dedicated volunteer to repackage it.

In the mean time, schools interested in following Greenboard's lessons can download and install most of the programs on their own.

The current goal is to perfect its lessons and translate Greenboard to English, so schools in other countries will be more able to access it.

"That we can get this into primary schools, and that there has been so much community support, tells me we are going in the right direction," Lu Shouqun, chairman of the Chinese OSS (open source software) Promotion Union, says.

"But community projects like these need more attention and volunteers so more students can have a chance to access these resources."



A phoenix rises again

Defining Chinese in modern dance

By He Jianwei

A phoenix is rising from its ashes.

Cloud Gate Dance Theater founder and artistic director Lin Hwai-min vowed his company would rise like a phoenix after the troupe's rehearsal studio and warehouse complex in Taipei were destroyed in a blaze last February.

Since then, the company has received numerous donations from more than 5,000 people and companies.

Lin treats the fire as "a test from God." He and his company are continuing their world tour as reconstruction efforts begin back home. From November 27 to 29, they will present one of their lyrical dances from 2001 at the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA).



Dancers dressed in black perform on a white stage, like black ink on white rice paper.



In 2001, Lin explored the possibilities of tai chi and martial arts to

Seated beside a piano in the NCPA rehearsal room, the slim director looked a little tired. But there was fire in his eyes as he recounted the 36-year history of Cloud Gate Dance Theater.

It was the first snowfall of the season when Lin and two dancers spoke on the relationship between Chinese calligraphy and modern dance.

"The snow might be a good omen for the upcoming performance," Lin says.

He was joking, of course.

The 62-year-old director has been defining Chinese modern dance since the 1970s.

Born to a literary family in Chiayi Newport, Taiwan, Lin's grandfather studied in Japan for his Ph.D. and his father was the first governor of Chiayi County.

He first encountered dance at age five when he and his parents watched *The Red Shoes*, a British film about ballet. He asked his parents and other relatives to take him back to see the film seven or eight times.

When he returned home he would practice the ballet's movements, demolishing his slippers when he tried to use them as toe shoes. His mother bought him his first proper pair of ballet footwear after that.

In 1961, when modern dance company Jose

Limon performed in Taiwan, it reignited Lin's love of dance. He started writing at that time and published his "Nursery" in the *United Daily News*. The payment for that piece funded two months of dance classes.

His first trip to a ballet came in 1967, when the Australia Ballet presented *Swan Lake* in Taiwan. After the performance, a woman shouted, "We Chinese can't dance ballet. Our arms and legs are shorter than theirs."

But Lin was unwilling to submit.

Lin studied in the US two years later and received his master's of art in creative writing from the University of Iowa. While there, he took dance classes at the Martha Graham Dance School.

He suddenly realized that woman all those years ago was right.

The West promotes perpendicular aesthetics, but the East prefers the horizontal. He pointed to examples in both myth and architecture. The Greek boy Icarus flew too close to the sun until his wings melted, but in Chinese myth, Kua Fu died of thirst from chasing the sun.

"The columns in Greek temples and the Gothic-style churches soar toward the sky. But the architectures in our Imperial Palace is famous not for its height but for its continuous succession," Lin says.

When he returned to Taiwan in 1973, he

founded Cloud Gate Dance Company. "To be a Chinese choreographer and create modern dance for Chinese dancers is my dream. And for 36 years I have lived it," he says.

He said he owes a lot to Taiwanese culture in the 1960s, when the island was heavily influenced by the West. "I listened to Beethoven, Bob Dylan and the Beatles. I felt Peking Opera was noisy and never even heard of Kun Opera," he says.

Before becoming a choreographer, Lin was a

the the different movement be Western dancers.

"Ballet and Western modern and jump as high as possible, but tai chi and martial arts are t

The NCPA performance, Cu of a long journey into ancient spirituality.

In 2001, Lin explored the po and martial arts to create *Cursi*

"Ballet and Western modern dance fight gravity as high as possible, but for Chinese dancers, tai martial arts are their DNA."

promising writer and published the collection of short stories *Cicada* in 1969.

The troupe's first performance sold 3,000 tickets. "Many people who bought the tickets were just curious about why a writer created a dance," he says.

His early works adapted classical literature and legends, such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the *Legend of White Snake*.

But after *My Nostalgia, My Songs* in 1991, Lin gave up the stories and began to deal with

from calligraphy.

After studying masterpieces raphy, Lin found that despite th styles, all the brush works share ment: focused energy and "danc produced unimaginable movem slow motions to martial-arts-lik erful energy.

Dancers dressed in black pe stage, like black ink on white ric slide projections on several giga



create Cursive, its title derived from calligraphy.

Photos provided by the National Center for the Performing Arts

between Eastern and
a dance fight gravity
out for Chinese danc-
their DNA," he says.
cursive, is the result
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perform on a white
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antic white screens

serve as the only set.
For each scene, the screens change to reveal black drapes upstage or hung in mid-air. Calligraphy is the sole content of the projections. Close-ups of characters by master calligraphers are beautiful and abstract, defying the meaning of the characters but echoing the energy flow of the dancers.
"Writing calligraphy is like dancing with the brush," he says.
Although childhood punishment made Lin's own memories of writing bitter, he remains fascinated with reading calligraphy books. "Reading calligraphy from hundreds of years ago is a way to communicate with ancient masters. I even can read what they were thinking when they wrote each character," Lin says.
Lin's use of traditional culture to inspire modern works quickly won him critical acclaim.
The New York Times said, "Lin Hwai-min has succeeded brilliantly in fusing dance techniques and theatrical concepts from the East and the West."
But Lin still believes local people are the root. "Go to the countryside" is the company's everlasting policy.
When an earthquake caused 13,000 casualties in Taiwan in 1999, Lin and his dancers performed in the affected areas.

This year's typhoon Morakot caused severe damage to the island's southern coast, and Cloud Gate dancers gave encouragement to the afflicted with their performances.
"Cloud Gate is created for and by Taiwan people. When I'm in desperation, those people give me hope," he says.
When his mother was hospitalized for cancer, Lin met a middle-aged man on the hospital elevator around 1 am. The man told Lin he was in the audience when Lin's company performed after the 1999 earthquake.
The man said, "It was the first time our family smiled after the disaster. And now you are in trouble. I come here to tell you anything can be overcome."
"His words meant more than a glowing review by the *New York Times*," Lin says.
Now homeless for more than a year, Cloud Gate has finally secured a new base of operations after an agreement in April to grant the troupe an empty office complex in Danshui, Taipei County.
The complex will be renamed to the Danshui Arts Education Center. "It will be a great challenge for Cloud Gate to manage the new center," Lin says and hopes that the troupe will be able to thrive at the new center on a 10-year extension when its current 40-year contract expires.



Cursive
Where: Opera House, National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xichang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: November 27-29, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Editor: He Jianwei Designer: Deng Ning

English Encyclopedia a definitive China reference

By Zhang Dongya

After three years of work by 300 Chinese and foreign contributors, Berkshire Publishing Group has found success: a five-volume, 2,800-page text with 800 articles covering the history, politics and culture of China.

Since May, it has been adopted by many prestigious universities in the country, such as Peking University, and has been reviewed positively by major university libraries and public libraries in the US. It has also become a reference for corporations and government agencies such as the CIA. Berkshire is pitching it as the West's best source of general and authoritative knowledge about China.

"Westerners can tell you what famous events happened in 1492, but they have no idea what was happening in China. Our overall goal is to place China within global history – when a student thinks about a particular point in time, we want them to think about what was happening in China," Karen Christensen, 52, chief publisher of Berkshire, said.



Part of the production team behind *Encyclopedia of China* (from the left): Brad Walrod, Karen Christensen, Marty Lubin, Tom Christensen.

Choosing China

Founded in 1998, Berkshire is a small 10-staff publishing house located in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts. It focuses on global subjects and has published a highly acclaimed series of encyclopedias. The *Encyclopedia of China* grew out of its landmark six-volume *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, published in 2002 with Scribners.

In the late 1990s, Christensen turned her attention to Asia. After one trip to China in 2001, she was fascinated by the country.

"I could feel the energy and determination of the whole population. I relished the conviviality and humor, and the sense of possibility I felt in the air along with an intense focus on what lay ahead," Christensen wrote in the Introduction to the *Encyclopedia of China*. "It was all irresistible."

She became convinced that every American needed to know more about China's history, culture, language, jokes, politics and economics. She thought they needed to understand Chinese perspectives in every area – in business, education, politics, innovation and personal life – to be ready for the 21st century.

The *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, covering nearly all aspects of 20th-century Asia, gave the team a jump start on its China project. Some authors from the Asia project continued their efforts in new China volumes, including the previous China editor Cheng Lisun of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

"We were considering a similar book on India or Latin America, but for now we think China gives us more than enough to focus on," Christensen said. "Right now, Western students know more about the solar system than they do about China. We want to change this."

New and fascinating

The voluminous book collects 800 articles arranged alphabetically, with coverage sorted into categories and sub-categories. They are working with Chinese scholars to make the *Encyclopedia of China* more interesting and relevant to technological developments, science, education and online social networking.

Also, since Berkshire emphasizes environmental and economic issues, they are adding more about these subjects.

The head editor Cheng Lisun turned to a wide variety of Chinese references in preparing the original article list. It included all periods and knowledge domains, and many interesting aspects of traditional culture, such as townships and ancient libraries. That list was forwarded to academic contacts in the US and China, and to universities from Ireland to Shanghai, asking for suggestions and checking what other encyclopedias covered.

They dropped topics that were short on recent research and added new topics on environmental issues and the recent economic crisis.

It also left space for recent phenomenon like the Super Girl TV talent show, because Christensen said it may be something looked up often by Western students and professors.

"It all depends on what students and professors are asking for, and what we see as particularly important areas in education. We are always finding new, fascinating aspects of Chinese culture and history that we want to share," she said.

For other topics like Tibet's history, it includes its close ties to ancient Chinese dynasties, such as the story of Princess Wencheng, and details about the area's social progress in the last 50 years. "We are trying to work on better ways to explain Chinese and Western perspectives, and we try very hard to present both sides," she said.

They plan to make a new version every two to three years and are working on an arrangement for ongoing revisions and updates to the online edition. The revised and expanded second edition will be released in 2011.

Beyond the project, Berkshire is also producing smaller books as supplements for specific classes in the US.

One of them, *This Is China: The First 5,000 Years*, released in January, is a 120-page paperback distilled from the encyclopedia.

They are also making smaller academic books which cover specialized subjects like Chinese branding, education and communication.

Foreign insights

"It is a worthy cause. The world does need to know more about China. The Chinese are not all that good about telling for-

eigners about themselves, so a good outside publisher is the best thing for them," Wang Gungwu, a professor at the National University of Singapore, said.

With a foreign team and Chinese scholars in the US, the *Encyclopedia of China* is expected to have distinctive foreign insights on the country and its history.

"We often see ourselves more clearly through the eyes of others," Christensen said. "If a book or an article is written by an insider, it will not mention the details and history that provide context for readers unfamiliar with the subject."

As an outsider, they have to explain many terms, concepts and events in their publications that would be obvious to Chinese readers but that are completely unfamiliar to those in the US.

"We also make difficult ideas understandable by comparing them to something familiar, such as the land area of a Chinese province to a US state," she said.

One Western ignorance for which they tried to compensate was famous Chinese historic figures.

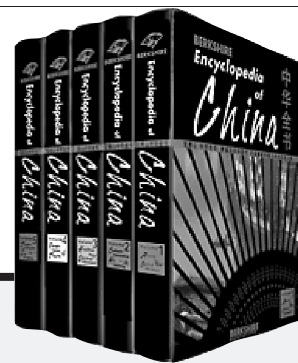
In the West, everyone knows Christopher Columbus and Julius Caesar, but they do not know that the Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty ruled an empire just as big as Caesar's, and began a series of explorations that reached from Russia to Africa, the publisher said.

They are specially developing a three-volume *Dictionary of Chinese Biography*, collecting the life stories of 150 key figures, selected from the earliest dynasties to the present day.

Chinese culture and Chinese inventions are also fully explained. "I suppose this might be the other great difference [from the China's Encyclopedia]: how we try to place China within global history as an imperial power and source of innovation," she said.

The China project has also lent more information to Berkshire's other books, the *Encyclopedia of Sustainability* and *Encyclopedia of World History*.

Christensen compared the producing of *Encyclopedia of China* to "fusion food," which combines the best elements of China and the West. "We want to learn from the Chinese, and we also need to help them understand us, and what Western readers desire from them," she said.



Berkshire's books on China



China Gold: China's Quest for Olympic and Global Glory

Edited by Karen Christensen, Hong Fan and Duncan Mackay, *The Observer*, 144 pp, \$24.95

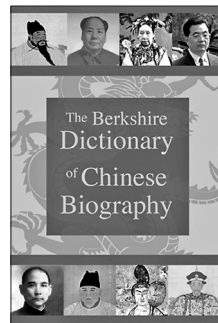
The book, written in close collaboration with US and European sports writers, provides a Chinese view of sports history, great Chinese athletes, martial arts, sports in the media and related political dramas.



This Is China: The First 5,000 Years

Edited by Haiwang Yuan, 120 pp, \$14.95

The book contains everything people need to know about 5,000 years of history, 30 years of "opening" and a future that promises to shape the 21st century. Drawn from the vast resources of the Berkshire Encyclopedia of China, this concise 120-page book is recommended for classroom use, curriculum development and student review.



Dictionary of Chinese Biography

Edited by Kerry Brown and Chatham House, 3 volumes, 1,840 pages, \$525, coming in October 2010

This book uses the life stories of 150 key individuals, selected from the earliest dynasties to the present day, to tell the story of the country. These individuals include emperors, politicians, poets, writers, artists, scientists, explorers and philosophers.

(By Zhang Dongya)

Photos provided by Berkshire Publishing Group

Style blogs drive the fashion scene



By Wang Yu

What makes fashion so attractive even though most of the glittering magazine ads are for things far beyond our reach? Some see fashion as a lifestyle, some envy and want to emulate their idols, some are vain and memorize the Prada lineup because they think it shows taste.

But most just want to stand out.

Big brands are never affordable for ordinary people, especially for fashion fans who throw out half their monthly income on the bills. So the rebels rose to make new rules. Inspired by street fashion posted on blogs, they are finding new forms of self-expression.

With the help of new style magazines, bloggers are setting the season's trends.

Diaries of mix and match

Paul Yang, the marketing manager of an entertainment company, doubles as the rock guitarist of a popular Internet band. But the professionals have inspired more than just his music: Yang and other rockers look to musicians for fashion inspiration.

"Never wear Nike Airforce shoes. They belong to B-boys on the street, not on gentlemen who sing and play guitar," Yang says.

A month ago, the guitarist began to regularly upload photos of himself to his blog to record his looks. He has been following foreign street fashion and style blogs for a long time, and decided to post his own ideas to find people who share his tastes.

The Strokes, a New York indie rock band, is one of Yang's favorites. But not just for their music – Yang loves their style of slim cut jeans, small leather jackets and vintage shoes. Their appearance long ago defined Yang's idea of "well dressed."

British singer and former front man of The Libertines also guided him to mix traditional gentlemen's attire with the decadent details of a rock artist.

"It is true that most young people in the scene dress nice and stand out in a crowd. But style is not the same as fashion, and expensive clothes cannot always make you look good. I want to prove you can look good wearing cheap stuff from Taobao," he says.

Nancy Zhang, a Berlin illustrator, attaches illustrations of herself to each of her blog posts. The young artist moved to Germany this summer to design cartoon characters. Creating the outfits for the characters is a part of Zhang's job, and some of those

outfits end up on her style blog.

Face Hunter and Garace Dore are her favorite fashion blogs. Since reading Blogspot blogs is difficult in China, she also uploads her photos on douban.com, where she has received a positive response from many of the community's users.

"At first it was just for fun to draw pictures of myself in different dresses with the photos. I've never thought I would still be doing it. A lot of people with the same interests found my blog, and for an illustrator, seeing people who like your work is the happiest thing," she says.

Zhang works a lot, but does it dressed like a 1900s woman in cozy countryside attire. Most of her clothes are bought from vintage stores and high-street boutiques.

"I collect beautiful things regardless of the brand. Style is one's attitude towards life and what I want is to live a common life far from the city's noise," Zhang says.

Fitting in between classes

While the bloggers were working from niche interests, the magazine industry has already responded with its own anti-mainstream fashion mags.

"Why do magazines like *Ray* and *Vivi* sell well, even better than mainstream magazines like *Vogue*? Because they offer useful information and introduce products which are affordable. However their styles are too young and innocent, and many in the city are looking for something new," says Jenny Li, chief editor of *Shopping & Shopper*, a magazine started in May.

Trend magazines which focus on shoes and hip-hop style have been popular in bookstores. With the support of the big brands, giants such as *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan*

and *Vogue* dominate the mainstream. But Li targets the middle class. Most of the photos that covers half of the magazine come from fashionable people overseas that the editors found online.

Li used to work for a record company, and said that the entertainment industry closely follows blogs since they document city tastes. Sports shoes and oversize T-shirts have been shelved for classic leather shoes, cheap Monday pants and slim cut cardigans. They record their attire with film cameras and are more willing to buy things from high-street fashion brands like H&M and Zara.

If the magazine were a person, it would be a British rock fan based on its slight alterations to classic looks. Li also goes beyond the boutiques to explore shops run by fashion buyers.

It took a lot for the magazine to win the trust of the blogosphere. Most people did not want to be paid for their photos, though they were afraid of them being used in other ways. Things changed fast after the first several issues, and before long the magazine was more widespread than mainstream publications.

"Everyone wants to express himself. Mainstream magazines use the stars as the examples while we tend to use normal young people. It may help more people to get involved in fashion," Li says.

Though there is a huge fashion market in China, information is limited. Li and her editors have been trying to look for native bloggers but the online scene is not as flourishing as it is in the West.

"Fashionable people in China are not so prominent online, they seldom share themselves," Li says.

Though *Shopping & Shoppers* is

Nancy Zhang's style blog attracts people who share the same tastes as her illustrations.

Photos provided by Nancy Zhang

defining the new fashion niche, finding a balance with the advertisers remains a problem. But most readers have been accepting.

"Between the luxury brands and the hip-hop wear, there are brands like Fred Perry, Energy and Miss Sixty which meets the needs of our readers. This is about ordinary people teaching ordinary people new and efficient ways to dress," Li says.



A warm, cozy home for the winter

By Wang Yu

In these subzero temperatures, there is nothing more tempting than skipping school or work and staying in bed, tucked under a warm, soft quilt. With the explosion of online merchandising, everything seems to be cheaper on the Internet. But when it comes to bedclothes, nothing is better than seeing and feeling what you will be spending the night with.

As the end of the year approaches, stores are slashing prices, which makes now the perfect time to go shopping for bedclothes – not exactly the cheapest things for the budget-conscious.

Beijing Today surveyed HOLA, a Taiwan-based home furnishing store, and discovered good winter deals for the bedroom and outside.



Chairs, 70 to 369 yuan

The bedroom plan

Most people spend a third of the day sleeping. To guarantee a good night's rest, look for quality mattresses and pillows.

Check out HOLA's Sleep Rite series. It has pillows for everyone: duck down (99 to 399 yuan) for those who want to drown in softness, latex (199 yuan) for people who want neck support and velvet (129 yuan) for the feel of luxury. Also available are latex "memory pillows," which are pressure-sensitive and mold quickly to the shape of the neck.

Choosing a quilt depends on how warm the bedroom gets. For those who wear only a T-shirt to bed, a silk quilt (599 yuan) is the best choice since it will allow the body to "breathe" during sleep. If the room temperature is on the other end of the spectrum, besides complaining to the property management office, get a woolen quilt (299 yuan) to ward off the chills. Quilts made of eiderdown (599 yuan) are the most versatile: the material expands and contracts depending on the temperature.

The series also includes cotton bed pads (42 yuan), which go between the mattress and the bed sheet to protect the mattress from stains. It also comes in wool at 299 yuan for a queen- or king-sized bed.

Sleep Rite offers a variety of designs, including bright flower sets (599 yuan) that consist of a bed sheet, quilt cover and two pillow cases. The bedclothes are made using active dye, so colors will not easily fade.



Bed sheet set, 299 yuan

Living room and accessories

Fans of the US TV series *Friends* should still remember Joey and Chandler's cherished La-Z-Boy sofas. Similar ones can be gotten at HOLA, but they come at a cost: 5,999 yuan. Made of ox hide, the Dalton recliners have wide, curved arm posts with pillow-top arms. The back is designed for comfort and support, and can be adjusted to 18 angles.

If company equals three, take a look at the L&G sofa (6,999 yuan), which comes in light colors. To spruce it up, add cushions (woolen, 79 yuan; Australian woolfell, 199 yuan).

Nature lovers will delight in Japanese-style chairs (79 yuan), shoe racks (199 yuan) and book shelves (488 yuan) made of rubber wood and bamboo.

Shoppers looking for extraordinary designs should check out the Sit&Joy lounge products. The Small Dot (50 yuan), a cotton chair that is available in a variety of colors, can be the brightest spot in the living room.

To combat the dry Beijing air, take a look at the hottest humidifiers of the season: a Christmas tree strung with lights (99 yuan) and Santa and his reindeer (129 yuan).



Pillar, 129 yuan



Christmas dolls, 129 yuan



Sofa covers, 199 to 329 yuan



Tea pots, 439 to 441 yuan
Photos provided by HOLA

10 tips for furniture shopping

1. Decide how much you want to spend and stick to it. It is very easy to go over-budget when shopping for furniture.

2. If you're a shopaholic or impulsive buyer, make a list of what you need before you leave the house.

3. Be prepared. If you need something in a specific color, bring color swatches so you don't end up selecting the wrong color. If you're buying a large piece of furniture, consider your space at home. Will it fit through the door and around other existing furniture? Measure critical areas.

4. Bring a friend. Getting a second opinion will not hurt.

5. If you're on a tight schedule, look at what is available, but do not buy. If you're in a hurry, you may make rash decisions, which can result in catastrophe you'll have to live with.

6. Visit your local stores frequently to learn about sales, weekly discounts and coupons. You can really reel in the savings by taking advantage of bargains.

7. The best way to get a good deal is by shopping during the "off season." This is usually during the coldest months of the year when everyone is hibernating.

8. Some items on show are either old, discontinued models or were once display pieces. Thoroughly examine each object for defects and surface damage.

9. Before handing over the cash, know the store's return policy.

10. For the greatest savings and widest selection, visit the customer service counter. Find out when new stocks arrive, when they do markdowns each week and when their annual floor cleaning sales happen.

HOLA Home Furnishing Stores in Beijing

Dongzhimen branch

Where: 4/F Raffles City, 1 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6772 8007

Huateng branch

Where: 2/F, 195 Dongxihuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am – 9 pm weekdays; 10:30 am – 10 pm weekends

Tel: 6772 9696

Jinsiji branch

Where: 117 Xisihuan Bei Lu, Haidian District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8849 5555

Laiguangying branch

Where: B1, 66 Xiangbin Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8490 3399



Trattoria La Gondola's head chef, Paolo Ascani

Pasta madness for Saturday brunch

By Annie Wei

Pasta originated in 13th-century Italy, particularly in the south, where people innovated by shaping it from small grains into thin long ribbons that could be dried and stored for years.

Over time, the tomato-based pasta sauce became popular and developed a hundred different recipes. With so many pasta shapes and sizes, as well as a multitude of sauce choices, people can try a different pasta dish every day of the year.

In Beijing, people who want to experience exotic Italian pastas should try the Pasta Special Saturday brunch at Trattoria la Gondola of Kempinski Beijing. The restaurant launched the special at the end of last month.

The restaurant's new head chef Paolo Ascani – known for his creativity with pasta and sauces – will be introducing his signature pasta to guests. All pasta are home-made from 100 percent durum semolina powder.

Diners can choose from four pastas served directly from the kitchen: pasta with Bolognese sauce, a classic Italian home-style recipe that Europeans love, though Chinese people find it a bit salty; pasta in rich tomato sauce with eggplant and red wine; air-dried pasta in pork ragout with courgettes; and rosemary and square pasta in spicy tomato mussel with white wine.

The brunch includes a choice of Caprese salad, traditional Caesar salad or classic chicken salad.

For desert, try Ascani's panna cotta made with cream and milk with vanilla bean, and sliced seasonal fruits with fresh mint. *Beijing Today* highly recommends this light and fresh-tasting concoction.

Trattoria la Gondola of Kempinski Beijing

Where: 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 5707

Cost: 125 yuan per person with 15 percent surcharge



Pasta in rich tomato sauce with eggplant and red wine

Photos provided by Kempinski Beijing



Rosemary and square pasta in spicy tomato mussel with white wine



Garden salad, 65 yuan



Paella valenciana, 145 yuan CFP Photos

Giving warmth inside and out

By Annie Wei

There is nothing like rich, flavorful food in a cozy restaurant to ward off the winter chill. This week, *Beijing Today* presents restaurants serving hot pot, Italian pasta and Spanish favorites that will warm you inside and out.

Sumptuous Spanish specials

By Annie Wei

Niajo, a new Spanish restaurant at Nali Patio, has quickly gained a reputation for tasty, authentic Spanish food and friendly service – albeit steep prices.

The restaurant was packed on a casual Friday night. Many people came in groups of 15 or more. This reporter shared a meal with five others; the group ordered six dishes that cost a total of 1,062 yuan.

We sampled the following: plato de quesos, or assorted cheese platter (95 yuan), featuring four types of cheese; jamon serrano (125 yuan), dry-cured Spanish ham with a strong flavor; patatas a la Riojana (30 yuan), a traditional dish of stewed potato and ham originating from the northern province of La Rioja; paella valenciana (145 yuan), fried rice with juicy vegetables and tender chicken bits; ensalada mixta, or garden salad (65 yuan); and steak dishes solomillo (125 yuan) and entrecote pimienta (125 yuan).

It is a good idea to visit Niajo with a group of friends because most of dishes come in big servings.

The restaurant has an extensive wine selection to please wine lovers. If wine is not your thing, try the traditional Spanish sangria (185 yuan per pitcher).

Restaurant owner and chef Alex Sanchez is very personable and likes to chat with his guests. Last Friday, he helped serve the food and explained the more uncommon dishes to diners.

Niajo's interior is casual and relaxed, bistro-style with an open kitchen. The window seats offer a good view of the Sanlitun bar street through the trees.

Since the restaurant is only a few weeks old, its food and wine list are only printed on regular paper. As it continues to make improvements, maybe it can enhance its interior design and layout to match its food's classiness.

Niajo

Where: 3/F Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 3 pm; 6-11 pm

Tel: 5208 6052

Finding cozy in tomato hot pot

By Annie Wei

Chinese people like hot pot in winter more than any other season. The reason is simple: the food is immersed in hot, tasty soup.

Unlike hot pot restaurants on noisy food streets such as Dongzhimen Nei Avenue, Fanqie Huoguo looks more like a cafe with its wooden tables, bookshelves and dainty decorations.

The moment you sit down, a server comes with a free cup of warm red bean drink (a refill costs 6 yuan). It is sweet and rich, like a red bean smoothie.

Fanqie is known for its thick tomato hotpot base (25 yuan). It is prepared with stewed onion, mush-

room, dates and wolfberries – ingredients that give the body needed warmth, especially in winter.

Before the meat, vegetables and the like are added to the soup, your server will suggest having a drink of it first. This is where the main dish doubles as an appetizer.

Beijing Today recommends throwing the following into your hot pot: ziran yangrou, or cumin lamb (25 yuan), which is tender with a light cumin flavor; bulaorou, or pure beef (25 yuan), a restaurant specialty that remains reddish even if immersed in the boiling soup for some time; huaneng jipian, or tender chicken slices (20 yuan); a plate of lean

lamb (25 yuan); and xiahua, or shrimp balls (35 yuan).

For non-meat dishes, order bai tofu (8 yuan) and cabbage (8 yuan).

Dips, which cost 5 yuan a bowl, come in three flavors: a sticky concoction of tomato and peanuts, sesame paste and spicy oil.

If you want a more filling dish, try the cheap and delicious huoshao, or baked wheat cake (1 yuan each).

The restaurant serves a free bowl of milk pudding for dessert.

Fanqie Huoguo

Where: 8 Xinyuanli Zhong Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6464 5678



Home-made pork ribs, 25 yuan Photo by Huang Xiao

Japanese post-rock giant on stage next Saturday

By Wang Yu

Post-rock groups without a popular lead singer are usually relegated to the margins. There are older music fans, however, who follow such bands purely for the beauty behind their guitar noises — one of which is Mono, a Japanese post-rock master that is playing in town for the first time next weekend.

Formed in Tokyo in 1999, the band has released five albums. It consists of electric guitar players Takaakira Goto and Yoda, bass and keyboard player Tamaki Kunishi and drummer Yasunori Takada.

Mono spent its early years, from 1999 to 2003, touring Asia, Europe and the US, during which it came out with the albums *Under the Pipal Tree* and *One Step More and You Die*.

From 2004 to 2007, the group toured worldwide to promote its subsequent albums *Walking Cloud and Deep Red Sky*, *Flag Fluttered and the Sun Shined*; and *You Are There* released under Temporary

Residence Limited. After a year's break, the band returned to the scene this year with *Hymn to the Immortal Wind*.

Mono's instrumental rock music style is influenced by the genres of experimental rock and shoegazing, a form of alternative rock, as well as classical music, noise and minimalism. Its sound is characterized by the lead and rhythm guitars of Goto and Yoda, both of whom employ reverb, distortion and delay.

The majority of the band's music is composed by Goto, who likes to talk about joy and sorrow. The pieces were originally dominated by minimalism and noise, but later integrated more complex, orchestral arrangements and instrumentation. The band members do not



like being described as a "post-rock" band, saying they identify more with contemporary classical music.

Mono's live shows tend to feature intense and emotional playing, as well as extreme dynamics in its attempt to create an "unforgettable" concert experience. Since 2004's *Walking Cloud and Deep Red Sky*, it has been working with Chicagoan recording engineer Steve Albini, who the members feel accurately

captures the band's "raw emotions to tape."

Mono's front act next Saturday will be Sugar Plum Fairy, a Taiwan-based band with a similar sound.

Mono China Tour

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: November 28, 9 pm

Admission: 18 yuan (pre-sale); 200 yuan (at the door)

Tel: 8402 8477

Friday, November 20



Exhibition

The Same
Where: Red No. 1, Caochangdi,

Chaoyang District

When: Until January 17, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am – 5:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3204



Wang Yin Solo Exhibition

Where: Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 22, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9530

Movie

Landscape in the Mist

Where: Sculpting in Time (inside Beihang University), 37 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 8231 0664

Nightlife

Kamila Sasa

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6401 4611

We All Love Canvas Boots

After Class

Where: MAO Live

House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: November 20, 8 pm

Admission: 60 yuan; 50 yuan for people wearing canvas boots

Tel: 6402 5080



Au Revoir Simone China Tour

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 150 yuan

Tel: 6404 2711

Sunday, November 22

Exhibition

The Mirror Image of Female Art

Where: White Box Museum of Art, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 1, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6438 6903



Valuable Porcelain Unearthed at Maojiawan

Where: Beijing Art Museum (inside Wanshou Temple, northeast of Zizhu Qiao), Xisanhuan Lu, Haidian District

When: Until November 30, daily, 9 am – 4 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 6841 3380

Movie



Little Red Flowers

Where: No. 3 Club, 43 Beisanhuan Xi Lu, Haidian District

When: 3 pm

Admission: 20 yuan (includes a soft drink)

Tel: 8211 5288

Nightlife

Frank Segen

Where: MAO Live House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

The Unity of Jokers – X Street Armies

Where: 13 Club, 161 Lanqiying, Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 8261 9267

Saturday, November 21



Exhibition

Darwin Now

Where: Paleozoological Museum

of China, 142 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: Until November 29, daily, 9 am – 4:30 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 6833 7001



Link – Li Qi'an Solo Exhibition

Where: New Millennium Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu,

Chaoyang District

When: Until December 17, daily, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 4122

Nightlife

The Brilliant Gia

Where: MAO Live

House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 60 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

G-Eleven 1st Anniversary Party

Where: Hot Cat Club, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6400 7868

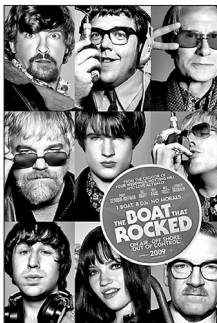
Learn to Fly

Where: Matata (right side of 3.3 mall), 33 Sanlitun Bei Jie, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 150 1118 8009

Movie



The Boat That Rocked

Where: Lele Bar (50 meters east of Communication University of China's north gate), Dingfuzhuang, Chaoyang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6576 5987

Upcoming

Opera

The Jester – Peking Opera (Rigoletto Recomposed)

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: November 24-25, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-600 yuan

Tel: 5166 3124

Stage in December

Concert

Piano Recital by Cristina Ortiz (Brazil)

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 4 Zhonghua Lu, Dongcheng District

When: December 6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Piano Recital by Michael Tsalka (Israel)

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 4 Zhonghua Lu, Dongcheng District

When: December 18, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Vienna Festival Philharmonic Orchestra New Year Concert

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: December 28, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 5166 1145

Secret Garden Duo Concert 2009

Where: Great Hall of the People (west side of Tian'anmen Square), Xicheng District

When: December 30, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 5128 6286

Dance

Peony Pavilion – National Ballet of China (NBC) 50th Anniversary Series

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: December 8-9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 120-600 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Prism

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: December 18, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Haze

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: December 19, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Opera

Goodbye, UFO – The "First 3D Acrobatic Musical"

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: December 17 – January 19, 2010, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6831 6633

Monologues – Revel's World of Shakespeare

Where: Penghao Theater, 35 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: December 19-27, 7:30 pm

Admission: 120 yuan

Tel: 5129 0082

(By Jackie Zhang)

Health risks of humidifiers

By Han Manman

As Beijing enters its coldest season and people are cramped indoors around the heaters, the air temperature can get as dry as in a desert.

Using a humidifier may seem like a good way to stay healthy during the winter, but be warned. While a humidifier can provide relief from the dry air, it can become a health hazard if it is not properly cared for and maintained.

Types of humidifiers

There are three types of humidifiers on the market. Vaporizers use heat to bring water to a boil and release steam into the air. Cool-mist humidifiers use a motor to turn water into a mist, which is released into the air. Ultrasonic humidifiers use a fast-vibrating mechanism called a nebulizer to produce a finer mist.

However, each type has its own problems.

Vaporizers get very hot, and in a home with children they can be a burn risk.

Cool-mist humidifiers pose health risks if not cleaned regularly. The water left sitting in the humidifier can grow mold spores, fungus and bacteria, which will be released into the air the next time the unit is turned on. Also, if tap water is used, minerals or contaminants in the water may be distributed into the air as a fine, white dust, which will build up on the surface of furniture.

Though it has not been proven that using tap water in ultrasonic humidifiers poses a serious health risk, researchers have documented that these humidifiers are efficient at dispersing minerals from tap water into the air. An ultrasonic humidifier is generally considered safer than the cool-mist variety because the nebulizer breaks up the mold spores and other contaminants. But there is no guarantee some will not be released into the air.

Getting rid of white dust

Additionally, the high mineral content of tap water can cause a dirty film to build up inside the water reservoir.

"Many consumers have concerns after using humidifiers because they notice tiny, dust-like particles on furniture nearby. Some models may release high concentrations of these particles into the air when they are filled with tap water," Li said.

"If you have allergies or an existing asthma condition, regularly inhaling these impurities can aggravate your symptoms or cause a full-on attack."

He said a more serious side effect is a little-known illness called humidifier lung. Also known as "humidifier fever" and more formally as "hypersensitivity pneumonitis," this is a lung condition that develops when you inhale vapors contaminated with certain strains of bacteria.

Temporary symptoms of humidifier lung include cough, fever, chills, shortness of breath, body aches, lung inflammation and malaise. These will typically subside when the cause is corrected. But if you continue to breathe contaminated air day after day, you may develop chronic symptoms such as weight loss, loss of appetite, respiratory infections, lung scarring and lung disease, Li said.

Dangers of high humidity

By dispersing an invisible mist throughout a space, a humidifier can help to relieve dry, itchy skin, moisturize parched respiratory passages and reduce static electricity. They are also a godsend for people who suffer from chronic breathing problems.

However, few realize that too much humidity also causes problems. The moisture, if excessive, promotes the growth of bacteria in the home. Among the worst are dust mites, microscopic animals that produce allergens known to trigger asthma.

"Increased humidity may ease breathing in children and adults who have asthma or allergies, especially when they have a respiratory infection," said Li Yadong, an expert from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention's institute of environmental health and product safety.

But a dirty mist, caused by the growth of allergens in a humid environment, can trigger or worsen asthma and allergy symptoms.

"Those with lung diseases, respiratory allergies, the young and the elderly may be particularly susceptible to airborne pollutants dispersed by home humidifiers," Li said.

He said an ideal setting is 30 to 50 percent humidity. When humidity pushes 60 percent you get condensation, which breeds bacteria and fungi.

Check your home humidity with a hygrometer.

Using and maintaining a humidifier

To keep humidifiers free of harmful mold, fungi and bacteria, follow the guidelines recommended by the manufacturer.

1. Change the water in your humidifier daily. Stagnant water is a breeding ground for mold spores and bacteria. Empty and wipe down your unit's water reservoir every day and refill it with clean, fresh water.

2. Use distilled or de-mineralized water to fill your humidifier. Distilled or de-mineralized water has less mineral content than regular tap water. When used, these water types make your humidifier less likely to expel white dust into the air.

3. Clean your humidifier thoroughly every few days. Use a soft-bristled brush and a mild cleanser when cleaning out the inside of your unit's water tank. Wipe down the exterior with a clean, damp cloth. Wait for all components to dry completely before refilling it with fresh water and turning it on.

4. Use a natural cleaning solution to clean your humidifier. This is especially beneficial to allergy- and asthma-sufferers, as well as those who have chemical sensitivities. Harsh cleaners leave odors and residues that may aggravate symptoms. Use natural white vinegar, which doubles as a disinfectant and deodorizer, to clean and disinfect surfaces.

5. Clean the humidifier, as directed, at the end of the humidifying season or when you know it will not be used frequently. Before storage, make sure all parts are dry and dispose of all used demineralization cartridges, cassettes or filters.

6. Keep the humidifier in a central location and out of your bedroom — especially during the night.

7. Keep the area around the humidifier dry. If the windows, drapes, carpet or tablecloth near the humidifier becomes wet, turn it off or use it less often.

CFP Photo



Green tour in Liuminying

Exploring China's first eco-agricultural village



By Zhang Dongya

Ecological agriculture focuses on sustainable development, unlike industrial agriculture, which emphasizes techno-science and mechanization. The former, which has been around since the '80s, has not only raised the income of rural residents but also created new tourism destinations.

Beijing's Liuminying Village, dubbed the "first eco-agricultural village of China," is one of the domestic tourism industry's newest wonders and is attracting international attention.

Early this month, 90 Percent Travel agency took a group of 13 people, including 10 foreigners, to explore the village. "Food is one of the most vital elements of any culture, so what better way to learn about Chinese culture than to explore a farm," said Tayler Cox, the event organizer and a participant from the US.

Eco-farming hub

Liuminying, located in Daxing district's Changziying town, is 25 kilometers from the city center. But getting to the village is easy, since it is served by Bus Sub-line 926. 90 Percent Travel and its guests took a one-hour mini bus from Guomao.

The village has 242 households and a population of 861. The Liuminying Tourist Farm consists of four zones, two parks and two centers. The four zones are the main attractions: a high-tech organic agriculture demonstration plot, a contaminant-free organic vegetable demonstration plot, a folk custom tourist zone and a demonstration zone for comprehensive methane and solar power use.

The folk custom zone, the first stop on the tour, has almost a hundred guesthouses featuring folk customs. Tourists can learn how to make

dumplings and use a stone grinder.

The village, which is wealthier than its neighbors, invested 5 million yuan to build an ecological park near its entrance. The other park is an agricultural one, which houses animals and plants.

The two centers are the international ecological agricultural academic, study and training center and the restaurant, conference and entertainment center, which can accommodate as many as 1,000 people.

Liuminying also features exercise venues, and visitors can participate in intensive cultivation and aquaculture activities, harvesting, fishing and barbecues.

The village has been developing its eco-agricultural demonstration sites for two decades and set up a tourism office in 2003. It has since welcomed guests from more than a hundred

countries with guide services provided by trained residents.

Exploring the organic food aisle

Tayler Cox, 23, a Chinese language student at Beijing Language and Culture University, organized 90 Percent Travel's trip to Liuminying. Ten foreigners studying or working here, and who were interested in eco-agriculture, signed up.

Cox, a native of California's Bay Area, has long been interested in organic agriculture. "I've been exposed to the sustainability movement in the United States. I wanted to learn more about China's agricultural system and how people are changing the food system on a local level," she said.

Continued on page 21...



Liuminying sells organic cabbages at about 15 yuan per kilogram wholesale.



The farm raises livestock including milk cows.



The village produces all its compost from human and animal waste.

Photos by Tayler Cox



Farm workers harvest with cabbages in this season.

... continued from page 20



Tourists are introduced to Liuminying's folk customs.



Visitors can feed the animals in the farm with vegetables that are provided in the village.



The marsh gas plant supplies energy to the village.

Photo by Tayler Cox

Liuminying has been developing its eco-agricultural demonstration sites for two decades.
Photos provided by Liuminying Village

The group visited Liuminying's organic agriculture greenhouses and helped workers harvest cabbages. Unlike other farms, visitors to Liuminying are not required to buy what they pick. The government helps Liuminying cover part of the 80,000 to 100,000 yuan price tag of each greenhouse.

The farm is inspected by a central government agency every year or two for its organic produce certification. Local guides say the first things inspectors check is the trash, to look for pesticide containers.

The farm sells its produce through retail chains such as Walmart and Carrefour. Its organic cabbages sell for around 15 yuan a kilogram wholesale, much higher than its non-organic counterpart at one yuan a kilogram.

Its cucumbers go for about 20 yuan a kilogram, which is almost what they cost at organic stores in the US.

Sustainable community

Liuminying not only produces healthier and safer food; it also promotes sustainable community. It follows a model that has raised the living standard of the entire village, not just its owners.

Three greenhouses can be managed by one worker, who is paid according to his productivity. On average, the worker can earn between 10,000 and 30,000 yuan a year. The costs of maintaining the greenhouse are shouldered by the Liuminying Farm Company, the farm management.

Villagers also benefit from their crops: they are given a free organic egg each day. "Caring for

the people who work on the land is just as important as caring for the land itself in the long term," Cox said.

Some of these eggs made their way to the Olympic Village during last year's Beijing Games.

Besides growing organic vegetables, Liuminying also raises livestock. The farm has 200,000 chickens, 200 milk cows and 5,000 pigs. Visitors can feed the animals with the vegetables provided.

There was one thing about Liuminying, however, that dismayed Cox: the animals' poor living conditions.

"I did not personally see the inside of the chicken facilities, but it looked like many chickens were kept in dark buildings in small cages with little room to move," she said. "In my mind, this resembles more closely the type of industrial farming techniques that breed disease and suffering among animals."

But many visitors leave with a positive overall impression, especially when they see the farm's waste disposal system.

Each household has a tank for human waste, which is collected every month or two. The waste is processed to produce methane, which becomes the energy used to heat local homes, as well as those in six nearby villages. The rest is combined with animal waste for composting.

"China and the US are both top consumers of fertilizers and pesticides, and the path to reversing the land damage inflicted by industrial agriculture over the years will have to start in our two countries," Cox said.

Travel information

Tour of Liuminying Farm

Cost: 290 yuan; 20 percent off for children under age 16

Tel: 15117916648

Email: info@

90percenttravel.com

What's included:

1. Local guide service
2. Transportation on an air-conditioned bus
3. Drinking water
4. Tickets to visit the Liuminying Eco-agriculture Park
5. Traveler's accident insurance

Note: The tour begins in the afternoon and takes about five hours.

An ecological park faces the farm's entrance.

Photo provided by 90 Percent Travel



Dining



Christmas Eve buffet dinner

Atrium Cafe presents a sumptuous buffet of traditional dishes like honey-glazed ham and roast turkey. Also included is a wide selection of salads, seafood and Asian favorites.

Where: Atrium Cafe, Gloria Hotel Beijing, 2 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: 6:30-10:30 pm

Cost: 688 yuan per adult, 388 yuan under age 12, includes free beer and soft drinks with live entertainment

Tel: 6515 8855 ext. 2212



Grand Christmas

Grand Millennium Beijing is taking things up a notch this holiday season. Celebrating its stunning outlets, it is hosting Christmas and New Year programs guaranteed to make you merry.

Where: CBD, Grand Millennium Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 24 and 25

Cost: 966 yuan (Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet), includes raffle and entertainment 5:30 pm onward; 298 yuan (Christmas Day Brunch), add 70 yuan for champagne and martinis, 15 percent surcharge; 266 yuan (Christmas Day Dinner Buffet) with free wine, beer, juice and champagne, 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 6530 9383

Celebrate Thanksgiving

Celebrate Thanksgiving with French flair and indulge in a specially concocted five-course menu from Brittany lobster salad over pumpkin soup with onion confit to scrumptious pigeon with grilled foie gras and red fruits. All come with fine wines selected by Raffles' sommelier.

Where: Raffles Beijing Hotel, 33 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

Tourism

Promoting inbound travel

China Travel Depot, the inbound tourism Web site of China Youth Travel Service (CYTS), is cooperating with People's Daily Online, the foreign-language version of *People's Daily*, from Tuesday to develop an E-travel partnership for expats and inbound tourists.

The two English-language units will provide foreign readers with a variety of tourism products online, real-time booking services for air tickets, hotel, Yangtze cruises, car rentals and tourism packages. They will also offer safe and efficient online payment methods.

(By Zhang Dongya)

When: November 26, 6:30 pm
Cost: 788 yuan net per person, including selected wine
Tel: 6526 3388 ext. 4186 or 5331



Gala Christmas

Indulge in an evening lined up to make Christmas night the most enjoyable of the year. Marco Polo Park-side is hosting a special Gala Christmas Buffet Dinner. Its chef has prepared an international seafood buffet with free wine, beer and soft drinks, great raffle prizes and wonderful entertainment. A fun night awaits you and your family at a time-honored evening of exclusive Christmas dining.

Where: The Grand Ballroom, Marco Polo Park-side, 78 Anli Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 24

Cost: 1,688-1,888 yuan per adult (VIP), half off for children under age 12 (age two and under free)

Tel: 5963 6468



Eating with Nemo

Enjoy a sumptuous array of king crabs, freshly shucked oysters, lobster, caviar, prawns and salmon. Savor your fresh catch with homemade condiments, or have it steamed, fried or roasted to your taste at a live cooking station.

Where: Elements, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Friday, 6-10 pm

Cost: 228 yuan per person including coffee and tea; 288 yuan for coffee, tea and free local draft beer; add 120 yuan for free wine; 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 5865 5020



2010 Evian Paul Smith Bottle

After the successful launch of Merry Cou Cou in 2008 and Jean Paul Gaultier in 2009, Evian has once again partnered with an internationally acclaimed designer – Paul Smith, to produce a unique and exclusive creation – 2010 Evian Paul Smith bottle. The bottle comes with a very clean design and features the signa-

ture colorful stripes of the designer, crystallizing the new life ideal of Live Young advocated by Evian.

Iams Eukanuba launches 40th Anniversary offer

Iams Eukanuba has a special offer to celebrate the 40th anniversary. Dog owners who buy Iams Eukanuba products (15 kilograms) for small or large breeds by November 30 can save 100 yuan on each bag.

Eukanuba has been innovating dog nutrition for 40 years. Its formula contains high-quality, animal-based proteins, 100 percent nutrition and no percent filler with natural vitamins, minerals and an optimal ratio of omega-six and omega-three fatty acids to promote dogs' overall health.

December sushi class

Join Max Levy, Bei's award-winning chef, for a comprehensive series of sushi classes. Max will take you step by step through the intricate aspects of sushi making. Its November cooking class starts December 2 with a weekend class on December 5.

Hotel

Christmas carols and tree lighting

The Christmas-tree-lighting ceremony is a Kempinski Beijing tradition. Every year on the first Advent Sunday, the hotel lights up its tree while the Little Angels children's choir sings carols.

Bring along your family and friends and enjoy the German Christmas Stollen, Christmas cookies, mulled wine and non-alcoholic punch.

Where: Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: November 29 and December 6, 13, 20 and 24, 6-6:30 pm

Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 5707

Resort



AYANA unveils latest renovations

AYANA Resort and Spa Bali has unveiled the latest upgrade to its facilities since its rebranding, with extensive renovations to the Padi Restaurant and the Ballroom. Padi, previously the resort's Thai restaurant, has been completely renovated and expanded, and its dinner menu expanded with Indian, Indonesian and Thai offerings. The international buffet breakfast served at Padi has also been relaunched to offer a gourmet dining experience at six food stations. The Ballroom's refurbishment includes new conferencing facilities, bringing it up to date for meeting planners.

Event

Where: Bei, The Opposite House, Building 1, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 388 yuan per person includes tasting, ingredients and materials

Tel: 6410 5230

China Premier Wine Expo 2009

China Premier Wine Expo 2009 is a two-day event for trading fine wines, spirits, cheeses and other luxury foods and accessories. The expo provides an extensive schedule of activities for exhibitors to develop their businesses and for consumers to experience the finest wine and luxury foods from around the world. Connect with thousands of wine traders from the mainland and Hong Kong, as well as purchasers from all over the country.

When: November (professionals), November 29 (professionals and public), 10 am – 5 pm

For more information: chinawineexpo.cn

(By Sun Feng)

Houhai of the suburbs

Restaurants and cafes of Roma Lake

By Zhang Nan

Roma Lake's name, *Luoma* in Chinese, is a portmanteau of Luogezhuang and Matouzhuang, the villages that surround it.

Two years ago, it was only a fishing spot for residents. Now, it has become the Houhai of the suburbs – minus the huge crowds and deafening noise. Its restaurants and cafes offer a variety of Chinese and international cuisines, and nearby, villagers go on with their daily lives.

The place to appreciate time and food

By Jackie Zhang

The Chinese name of Yuan's Restaurant is "shangshi," which means to appreciate time while enjoying good food. And it has just the atmosphere to deliver that promise. Located next to Roma Lake, the restaurant has a splendid view of the outdoors; inside, it has lovely European decor.

Yuan's specializes in teppanyaki. "French, Japanese and Taiwanese teppanyaki are the most popular because of their unique flavors and cooking styles. Yuan's offers all three," Qi Guangliang, the restaurant's customer manager, said.

French teppanyaki comes with foie gras and snails, Japanese teppanyaki capitalizes on its sweetish-salty sauce, while Taiwanese teppanyaki is prepared in front of diners.

Two other popular dishes at Yuan's are prawns with honey and mustard (88 yuan) and Australian scallops (48 yuan). The French foie gras with red wine (98 yuan) is also worth a try.

Beer lovers should not miss its Belgian beer. "The world's best beers are from Germany. But Belgian beers are also not bad. All of our Belgian beer are fermented twice, which give them a rich, heavy flavor," Qi said.

For winter, Yuan's specially offers porridge hot pot (150 to 160 yuan). "We serve several kinds of porridge hot pot and guests can add fish, meat or vegetables, depending on their preference. We hope to make the winter a little warmer with this secret recipe," Qi said.

Yuan's Restaurant

Where: 10A Roma Lake, Houshayu, Shunyi District

Open: Daily except Monday, 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 8049 7601

Taiwanese lemongrass hot pot

By Zhang Dongya

Lemon Grass differs from your regular Taiwanese restaurant by specializing in hot pot with lemongrass that is grown right inside the restaurant.

The owner, Taiwan native Allen Chen, grows lemongrass in pots inside the restaurant. He has Thai lemongrass and the plant's mainland and Taiwanese varieties. In summer, he also grows them in front of and behind the building. Chen is only too happy to introduce his "treasures" to interested customers.

With the onset of winter, hot pot is again in vogue. The restaurant offers two choices of hot pot base: clear lemongrass (5 yuan) and Thai spicy (10 yuan), both with lemongrass as their main ingredient.

For the dip, there is lemongrass sauce, Thai sauce and sesame paste, each at five yuan a bowl.

Beef, mutton and cuttlefish balls (all 18 yuan) and mushroom meat balls



Photo by Zhang Dongya

(16 yuan) are popular hot pot orders.

Not to be forgotten are Lemon Grass' Taiwanese dishes. Customer favorites include three-cup chicken, Taiwanese stewed chicken and satay with Beef, all at 42 yuan.

Lemon Grass has created spin-offs of three-cup chicken, a Taiwanese specialty prepared using a cup of oil, a cup of soy sauce and a cup of rice wine: it has developed three-cup shrimp (58 yuan), three-cup cuttlefish (52 yuan) and three-cup mushrooms (32 yuan).

The restaurant's Taiwanese food uses seasonings imported from the island, notably sesame oil, soy sauce and rice wine.

It also offers Taiwanese tea such as Taiwan Oolong Tea (48 yuan a pot). Green tea with lemongrass is 16 yuan a pot.

The restaurant can seat 70 and offers free Wi-Fi to customers. In its backyard are three tables for diners who come with their pets.

Lemon Grass

Where: 8 Luodong Lu, Luogezhuang Village, Houshayu Town, Shunyi District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm
Tel: 8049 2016

Country cooking and atmosphere

By Venus Lee

Sitting cross-legged, having dinner with one's family on a kang, a heatable brick bed, is a common sight in northern rural areas in winter. People who want this dining experience in Beijing will find the answer at Yuhuyuan.

Yuhuyuan, which opened in 2003, is Roma Lake's first restaurant. Its location, adjacent to the lake and its simple wooden architecture, gives it a very rural ambiance.

It specializes in country-style cooking — dishes from the country's various regions — served in generous portions. For instance, mabupa (70 yuan), a hodgepodge of bullfrog, dried tofu sticks, sweet potato vermicelli and bean sprouts, is a Sichuan dish. Nongjiale (36 yuan), a mixture of stewed pork with brown sauce, spareribs, potato, kidney bean and pancake, is a northeastern Chinese favorite. And Jialidun (36 yuan), a medley of spiced eggs, beef and potato, is a Hebei dish.

The vegetable dishes here are very popular among expats, particularly the sauteed shrimp with cashews (58 yuan), braised mixed mushrooms (28 yuan), sweet corn and pine seeds (36 yuan), sliced Chinese cabbage in vinegar (26 yuan), broccoli with garlic (26 yuan), lettuce kavas with garlic (26 yuan) and bean sprouts with garlic (22 yuan).

"If you're not accustomed to eating on a bed and want to enjoy the lake's beautiful scenery while having dinner, the barbecue on the second-floor terrace is another good choice," Wang Yanxiang, the manager, said.

Yuhuyuan's barbecues are actually among customers' favorites; they include roast leg of lamb (32 yuan, 500 grams), roast chicken (46 yuan), roast mutton chops (38 yuan), spicy fried chicken wings (68 yuan) and caked steamed buns (3 yuan).

Worth a try are its fresh and tender spotted silver carp (64 yuan per kilogram) and steamed trout (68 yuan), which come from the Miyun Reservoir where they quite grow, Wang said.

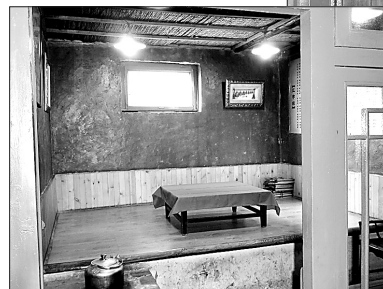
Yuhuyuan

Where: 16 Roma Lake, Houshayu, Shunyi District

Open: 9 am – 9 pm

Tel: 8049 1295

Yuhuyuan



Photos by Venus Lee



Yuan's Restaurant

Photo by Jiao Shu



Anlian

Photo by Jiao Shu

Home cooking and creativity on the bank

By Jackie Zhang

It is a warm, quiet and comfortable place to let your mind and body relax. Unlike most restaurants, Anlian, which means in love with the lake bank, is more like a home.

"I used to have my own household design shop, Go Go Fish, in Sanlitun. But in 2003, SARS changed everything. Sanlitun became a business area full of strangers every day. I couldn't rely on that kind of crowd, and looked instead for a comfortable place that made me feel at home," said Angela Chao, an interior decorator and founder of Anlian.

Chao started the shop at Pinnacle Plaza, close to her workshop.

"I used to come and eat at Roma Lake, it was so desolate. All I could find were some home restaurants run by the villagers. You couldn't enjoy the lake view with a cup of coffee. That's when I thought of starting a restaurant," Chao said.

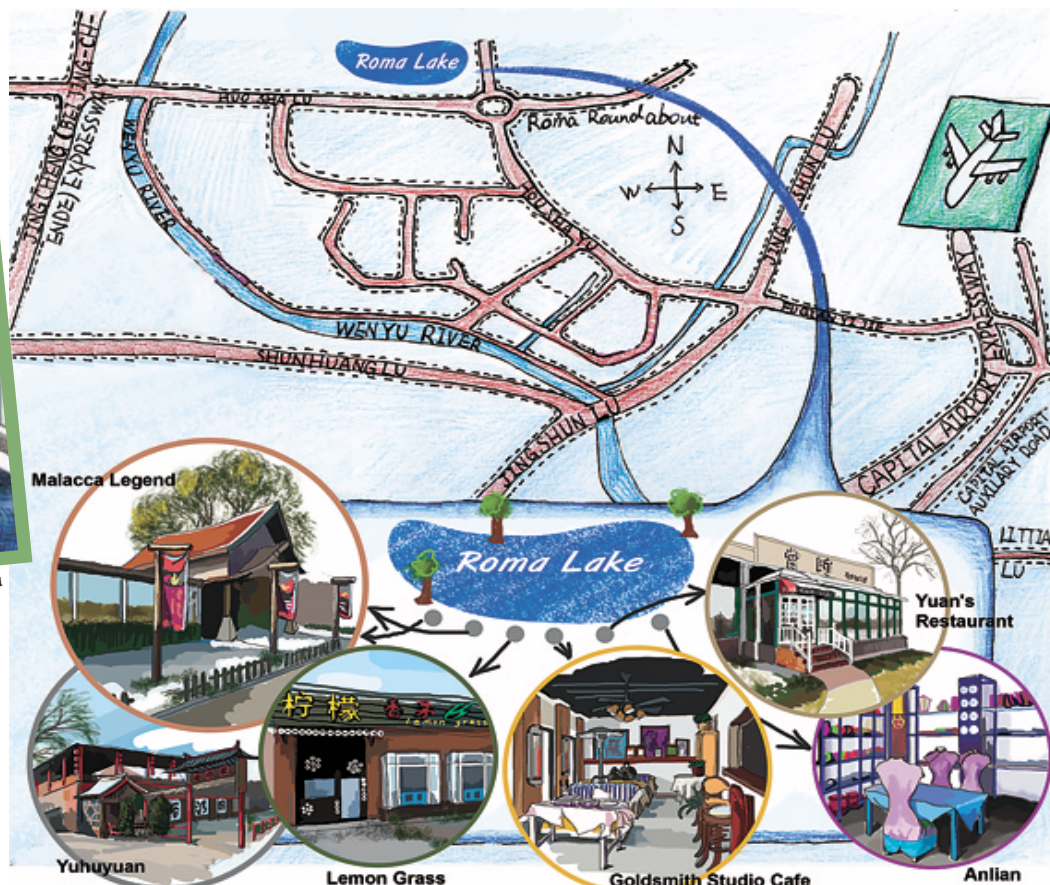
She opened Anlian at the end of 2007. It serves as a combination restaurant and a shop for household wares.

"Many people thought that I was crazy," Chao said. At the time, Roma Lake was undeveloped. "I had a really hard and lonely four months that winter. In spring of 2008, things began to improve. Many of my old friends and customers of Go Go Fish came to buy my designs and stayed to eat."

Anlian mainly serves East Asian food, Chinese food and Western food. In order to ensure the flavor, Chao planted her own herb and vegetable garden behind the store.

Braised fish (68 yuan) and sweet and sour pork with fresh pineapple (48 yuan) are the most popular.

All desserts at Anlian are made by Chao herself. The Crème Brulee (20 yuan) is excellent, but only 12 are made each day. Go early or reserve one by phone to try it.



Illustrated by Jiao Shu

Legendary food with Malay taste

By Zhang Dongya

Malacca Legend is beside Roma Lake in a two-story red Malay building. The restaurant offers a rich assortment of traditional Malay cuisines.

Its culinary origin goes back to the second half of the 15th century when Chinese and Indonesian styles mixed with Malaysian. Since then, Malaysian cuisine has partly merged with Chinese food in Guangdong, Fujian and Hainan provinces.

The restaurant, opened three years ago, can seat 200. Its verandah on the second floor offers a picturesque view of the lake.

The restaurant has a big menu with meat, seafood, vegetable, tofu, noodles, rice, soup and desserts.

Its Satay, the most featured dish of Nanyang, has both chicken and beef (30 yuan for 8 pieces). The honey-coated fried chicken (48 yuan) is also popular.

There are scores of noodles to pick from. They are priced 35 to 150 yuan. All the dishes are seasoned with varying levels of Malay tastes like ginger and lemon grass.

The Hainanese chicken rice (38 yuan) offers tasty rice balls with a Malay flavor: the sauce is made of ginger, cilantro, Malay peppers and soy sauce. Malaysian soy sauce has a richer bean taste.

They also have hot pot for four to six people. The chef recommendeds bak kut teh (188 yuan), which has pork ribs, pig tripe, pork shoulders, mushrooms and deep fried dough sticks.

Desserts with distinctive tastes are also worth trying. Bubur chacha (18 yuan), made from taros, sweet potatoes and coconut juice, is thoroughly Malaysian.

The restaurant opened its second branch last year at Ocean International Center, Chaoyang District, offering Chaoyang residents easier access to Malaysian food.

Malacca Legend

Where: 6C Luodong Lu, Luogezhuang Village, Roma Lake, Houshayu Town, Shunyi
Open: 11 am - 10 pm
Tel: 8049 8902

Golden dining

By Venus Lee

Goldsmith Studio Cafe's cream-colored walls, tables and sofas make it a warm and refreshing place to have a meal. The vintage fans and ceiling lamps, exquisite carved chairs and old fashioned furniture give it a classic yet contemporary feel.

The Cantonese restaurant is known for its boiled, sliced chicken (68 yuan), spicy baby pigeons (38 yuan), sauteed shrimp (88 yuan) and salted goose liver with roasted eggplant (32 yuan). The fried silver cod fish (88 yuan) and soy-preserved radish (22 yuan) are also famous.

The restaurant was named goldsmith after the owner and her husband's other profession. The two graduated as metal technicians and designers from Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology. "Our occupation was goldsmithing, so it worked as a good-sounding name for the restaurant," Lu Mei, the hostess, said while showing a ring her husband made for her 17 years ago.

The restaurant's dazzling jewelry looks amazing with the lighting. Most pieces are the hostess's personal picks from dif-

ferent countries. Some of the ornaments are available at reasonable prices.

The two-floor restaurant is spacious, bright and elaborately decorated. The first floor is for dining and exhibition, and the second floor is an open art studio for young goldsmiths and metalworkers.

"When I returned to China three years ago from Amsterdam, where metalworking devices are readily available to the community, I was surprised how hard it was to find a similar metalworking shop in China," Lu said. "You know, not all young goldsmiths can afford the necessary tools, so I decided to provide somewhere for them to share my tools and work together."

There is also a swimming pool for pets in the yard. "Some customers take their pets for a walk after dinner, so we wanted to give their pets a place to play too," she said.

Goldsmith Studio Cafe

Where: 11, Roma Lake, Houshayu, Shunyi District
Open: 10 am - 9 pm
Tel: 13910268761



The jewelry exhibition window in Goldsmith Studio Cafe
Photo provided by Goldsmith Studio Cafe



Malacca Legend
Photo by Zhang Dongya